# The Man and the Book—Scott

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# THE MAN AND THE BOOK

## — SIR WALTER SCOTT —

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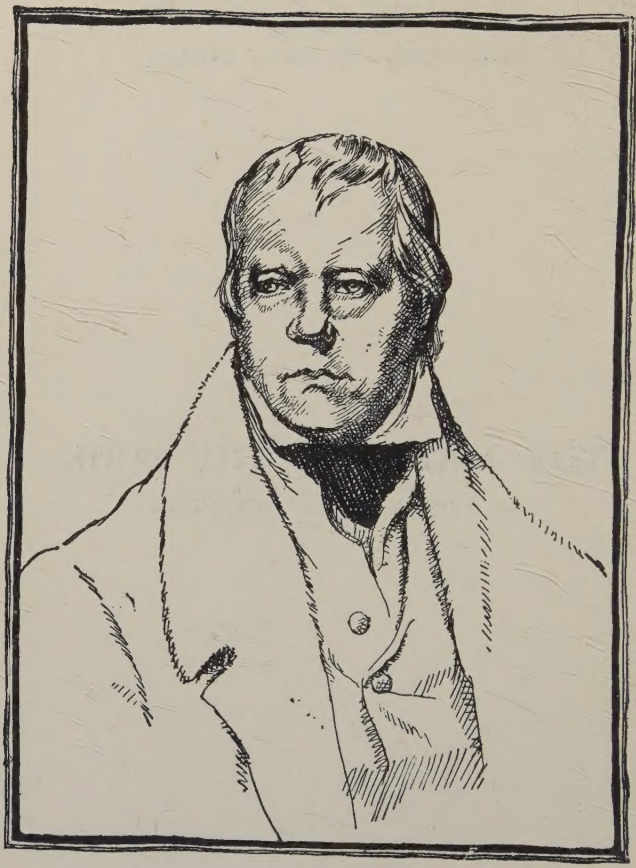

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*From a pen drawing by*
*E. Heber Thompson*

# THE MAN AND THE BOOK

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

By
JOHN BUCHAN

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# CONTENTS


I. Youth and Early Manhood . . . 7

II. The Poems . . . . . 15

III. The First Waverley Novels . . 38

IV. The Waverley Novels—"Rob Roy," "The Bride of Lammermoor," "The Heart of Midlothian" . . . 79

V. The Sunshine of Success . . . 120

VI. "Redgauntlet" . . . . . 164

VII. The Dark Days . . . . . 191

VIII. The End . . . . . 208

# THE MAN AND THE BOOK

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

### CHAPTER I

#### YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

If we were given the power of recalling to the present and beholding in the flesh a great writer of the past, what would our choice be? With many it would be Dr. Johnson; with many it would be Sir Walter Scott; but I think that these two would command most of the suffrages, because they are still personalities as real to us as our own contemporaries. We think of them as we think of famous men of action—as living and breathing human beings, and not dim shades from a library. We know them both so well that we can picture for ourselves every detail of their figure and dress; we are almost familiar with the tones of their voice; we are aware of their foibles and imperfections as we are aware of their transcendent qualities, and we feel for them the affection of personal friendship.

Most men of letters live only in their books. Their

lives are apt to be unfeatured and their characters can only be deduced indirectly from their writings. But Sir Walter Scott's character is as notable and engaging as that of any of the figures which his fancy created. He lived great drama and romance as well as wrote it. We are fortunate in having ample material for his life, quite apart from its reflex in his writings. His biography by his son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart, is one of the two greatest biographies in the English tongue. His private *Journal* reveals his innermost thoughts during the last stages of his life. For thirty years he was one of the most distinguished figures in Britain, and a hundred contemporaries have recorded the impression he made upon them. He would have been a great man even if he had not been a great writer. To know Sir Walter Scott as a man is as delightful and fruitful an experience as to appreciate the greatness of his books.

There is a pleasant fancy that the good and just return to earth now and then to revisit the scenes which they have loved. If such a shadow is found on some green drove-road in Ettrick Forest we know what shape it will take. It will be a tall, broadish man, with a ruddy face, mounted on a Highland pony, with a tangle of dogs at his heels. His head will be uncovered, and the wind will be blowing his silvery hair, while his keen eyes are roving the hills. He will hail us in soft Border Scots, and bid us mark the light on Ettrick Pen, and warn us to go carefully, for the shepherd at the Cross Shiels is gathering in his sheep. We might puzzle for a moment at such a figure, and then something in the face, and the green shooting-coat, and the deerhound by his side would suddenly

be familiar, and we would know that we were looking at the Last of the Minstrels. We would not be afraid, I think, to meet that kindly ghost.

Walter Scott was born on the 15th of August, 1771, in an old house at the head of the College Wynd in Edinburgh, the son of Walter Scott, a Writer to the Signet. On both his father's and his mother's side he came of a long line of Border lairds and yeomen, many of them notable in Scottish history. "There are few in Scotland," Lockhart wrote, "under the titled nobility, who can trace their blood to so many stocks of distinction." He had Celtic blood in his veins, too, through the ancient house of Macdougal. He was thus born to a great background of tradition and legend. The Edinburgh of his day was a good nurse for a romantic child. The Scottish Law and the Scottish Church found in it their headquarters; it was the capital to which all Scottish families of substance migrated for the winter season; and the stern little city on its backbone of rock had tradition enough of its own. The age was one of transition between old and new. At his birth the British Empire was in the making, and the French Revolution less than a score of years distant. Scotland was winning her way from the bitter poverty of the early eighteenth century to some degree of prosperity, and had already made a high place for herself in British literature and thought. The last Jacobite war was less than thirty years removed, and figures from that old world still haunted the Edinburgh streets. We find this story in Lockhart :—

Mrs. Scott's curiosity was strongly excited one autumn by the regular appearance, at a certain hour every evening, of a sedan chair, to deposit a person carefully muffled up in a mantle, who was immediately ushered into her husband's private room, and commonly remained with him there until long after the usual bedtime of this orderly family. Mr. Scott answered her repeated inquiries with a vagueness which irritated the lady's feelings more and more; until, at last, she could bear the thing no longer; but one evening, just as she heard the bell ring as for the stranger's chair to carry him off, she made her appearance within the forbidden parlour with a salver in her hand, observing, that she thought the gentlemen had sat so long, they would be the better of a dish of tea, and had ventured accordingly to bring some for their acceptance. The stranger, a person of distinguished appearance, and richly dressed, bowed to the lady, and accepted a cup; but her husband knit his brows, and refused very coldly to partake the refreshment. A moment afterwards the visitor withdrew—and Mr. Scott, lifting up the window-sash, took the cup, which he had left empty on the table, and tossed it out upon the pavement. The lady exclaimed for her china, but was put to silence by her husband's saying, "I can forgive your little curiosity, madam, but you must pay the penalty. I may admit into my house, on a piece of business, persons wholly unworthy to be treated as guests by my wife. Neither lip of me nor of mine comes after Mr. Murray of Broughton's." This was the unhappy man who, after attending Prince Charles Stuart as his secretary throughout the greater part of his expedition, condescended to redeem his own life and fortune by bearing evidence against the noblest of his late master's adherents, when

> Pitied by gentle hearts Kilmarnock died—
> The brave, Balmerino, were on thy side.

When confronted with Sir John Douglas of Kelhead (ancestor of the Marquess of Queensberry), before the Privy Council in St. James's, the prisoner was asked, "Do you know this witness?" "Not I," answered

Douglas; "I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton—but that was a gentleman and a man of honour, and one that could hold up his head!" The saucer belonging to Broughton's teacup chanced to be preserved; and Walter had made prize of it.

Walter was one of a large family, six of whom died in infancy, for the house in the College Wynd was unhealthy. After his birth the Scotts moved to a more wholesome habitation in George Square, near the Meadows. An illness at the age of eighteen months produced permanent lameness in his right leg, which prevented him from becoming a soldier, as was always his desire. It sent him also to his grandfather's farm of Sandy Knowe, near the castle of Smailholm, where he imbibed his lifelong passion for the Borderland. There are stories of him lying on the kitchen floor in the skin of a newly killed sheep for his health's sake, and crawling out alone among the hills in a thunderstorm, clapping his hands at the lightning and crying "Bonnie!" Even in these early days he showed a prodigious memory, learning ballads and poetry of all kinds with the utmost ease.

At the age of seven he went to the famous High School in Edinburgh, of which the head master was then Dr. Adam, an admirable Latin scholar, whose last words in his final illness are still remembered: "It grows dark, the boys may dismiss." The school days of Walter Scott were not distinguished. He sat near the bottom of the class, and shone only when it was a question of translating the classics into vigorous English. But he was a leader among the boys in every escapade, such as climbing Edinburgh Castle

Rock, and commanding in snowball battles against the street urchins. He always maintained that there was a deep vein of laziness in his family, and that the ordinary tasks of life were only performed by them with an effort. But while he was an idle scholar, he was very intent upon his own private business. He read every kind of literature he could lay his hands on—often, as he tells us, beginning a book in the middle, or wherever he found something to interest him. The education which he describes in the first chapter of *Waverley* was his—" driven through the sea of books like a vessel without pilot or rudder." When he went to Edinburgh College in his thirteenth year, his habits were the same. He had a facile but inaccurate knowledge of Latin ; Greek he never acquired at all ; but he picked up sufficient Italian, German, Spanish, and French to read the books that interested him. For history and every form of antiquarian lore he had a deep passion, and it was natural that in his fifteenth year he should enter upon the profession of the law, like his father before him.

Scots law was, along with the masterpieces of English literature and the ballads and traditions of the Borders, the chief educative force, I think, in Walter Scott's life. He never became a great lawyer, but the humours and pedantries of the legal profession were to have an abiding effect upon his work. As a lawyer's apprentice he visited the Highlands, and made the acquaintance of Mr. Stewart of Invernahyle, who had fought a duel with Rob Roy and who was " out " with Prince Charlie. In his office work he acquired the gift of steady and laborious writing, and it is recorded that he once covered without a halt one

hundred and twenty pages of folio, thereby earning thirty shillings for pocket money. In spite of his lameness he grew into a strong and active young man —the strongest man, said the Ettrick Shepherd, whom he had ever met. A walk of thirty miles in a day was nothing to him, and on foot or on horseback he roamed over the Lowlands. He had decided to follow the higher branch of the legal profession, and on July 1792 he was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates, just before he attained his majority.

The big, fair-haired, fresh-complexioned boy now began to appear in Edinburgh society, and made everywhere a host of friends. A lady who saw him at the time describes him thus: "His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful, and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humour in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady's eye. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome—tall, much above the usual stature, cast in the very mould of a youthful Hercules; the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished, the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness."

He was a famous story-teller in the lobby of the Parliament House, and whenever he could escape

from Court he was off to Liddesdale, or Galloway, meeting every type from bonnet-laird to salmon poacher, and laying up the treasures of experience which were later to be the groundwork of the Waverley novels. At nineteen he had fallen in love with a lady whom he called Green Mantle, and who, under different names, flits through all his writings. She married Sir William Forbes, the banker, but till the end of his life Walter Scott cherished her memory. "There is nothing in Scott," says Mr. Andrew Lang, "like the melancholy or peevish repining of the lovers in *Locksley Hall* and in *Maud*. Only in the fugitive farewell caress of Diana Vernon, stooping from her saddle on the darkling moor before she rides into the night, do we feel the heart-throb of Walter Scott. Of love, as of human life, he knew too much to speak." For five years he lived with his hopes, till, in 1796, Green Mantle married. The next year Scott's heart, as he says, was "handsomely pieced," for he fell in love with and married Miss Charpentier, whose portrait we find in the dark liveliness of Julia Mannering. In the summer of 1798 the Scotts began their married life in a little cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh.

Scott was now settled apparently in the career of a rising lawyer. He was beginning to acquire a practice, and he seemed to have found the life which satisfied him. He had many companions of like tastes, such as William Erskine and William Clerk of Penicuik, and he had powerful friends, such as the Duke of Buccleuch, the head of his family, who might be expected to assist him in his career. His conservative habit of mind already appeared in the vigorous part

he took in volunteer training and in his hostility to the revolutionary spirit with which France was affecting certain classes. His love of literature made it inevitable that he should try his hand at writing, and in 1796 he published a little volume containing translations of some of Burger's ballads, and three years later a version of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*. He was also trying his 'prentice hand at ballads of his own. In 1799 he was made Sheriff Depute of Selkirkshire, which gave him a connection with his well-beloved Borderland. At this time he looked to make his career at the Bar, and regarded writing as only an amusement for his scanty leisure. Literature, as he once said, was " a good staff, but a bad crutch." But no man with such stores of romance and poetry in his head could long refrain from giving something of it to the world, and in conjunction with a school friend, James Ballantyne, a printer in Kelso, he set about making a collection of Border ballads. It was the natural avenue into literature for a mind like his, so deeply under the spell of the past. He had first to lay bare to the world the poetic treasures of his own countryside before he added to them riches of his own.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POEMS

In 1802, when Walter Scott was thirty-one, the two first volumes of *The Border Minstrelsy* were published. He was very modest about the performance.

" I have contrived," he wrote to a friend, " to turn a very slender portion of literary talent to some account by a poetical record of the antiquities of the Border." The *Minstrelsy* sprang at once into fame. It put on record old ballads which were fast being forgotten ; moreover, it provided a version of these ballads prepared by one who was himself a poet, and these versions remain to-day the classic text. One result was to bring Scott into acquaintance with notable English men of letters, such as Wordsworth, and to put a spur to his own literary ambitions. The practice of his profession left him ample leisure, and the stirring days in which he lived, and his association with the Edinburgh Volunteer Horse kept his imagination at fever heat.

Some years before, the young Lady Dalkeith had asked him to write a ballad on the subject of a mysterious goblin, called Gilpin Horner, whose doings were a legend in the Borders. About the same time Scott heard part of Coleridge's *Christabel*, then in manuscript, recited by a friend. The metre took his fancy, and he set to work to obey Lady Dalkeith's wishes. The result was *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805, which established his poetical reputation. There had been little done in English poetry since Cowper, for Wordsworth and Coleridge were still almost unknown. The *Lay* was a story in rhyme which the simplest could understand, and the magic of the galloping verse and the strange atmosphere of romance were new things to a public a little wearied of the decorous strains of the Augustans. It was the ballad manner enlarged and adapted for a modern audience ; small wonder that it

delighted the whole contemporary world. In some ways it is the most perfect of all Scott's poems, for it is the first and the freshest, and the one sprung most directly from the memories of his youth. The main plot is indeed faulty, and there are many defects in the workmanship, but there are incidental passages which few romantic poets have equalled. Take this on how the Scotts won Eskdale :—

Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sons won fair Eskdale. . . .
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude ;
High of heart and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seignory to claim :
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,
Saying, " Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
. . . " Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need ;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou." . . .
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattisons' ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir ;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's lord he spoke,
Saying—" Take these traitors to thy yoke :
For a cast of hawks and a purse of gold
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold :

Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man ;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold ;
To Eskdale soon he spurred amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merry men in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still ;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said : . . .
" Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head ;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind." . . .

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn ;
" Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott,
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot." . . .

He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross ;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances appear ;
And the third blast rang with such a din
That the echoes answered from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke !
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through ;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's Haugh men call it still.

The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

Meantime the Scotts had left Lasswade and made their home at Ashestiel, an old house on the steep southern bank of the Tweed between Yair and Thornilee. It is in the most haunted part of the Borderland, for over the hills to the south lie Yarrow and Ettrick, and every glen is famous in ballad or story. Scott had still little practice at the Bar, but between his private resources and his Sheriffdom he had more than a thousand a year, and he had the reversion of a Clerkship in the Court of Session. Had he been content with Ashestiel, and never dreamed of Abbotsford, his life might have been the fortunate one of the country gentleman who has both law and literature to keep his mind active. Certainly those years at Ashestiel were among the happiest in his life. He had the family of Buccleuch near him at Bowhill, English men of letters constantly visited him, and Edinburgh was less than thirty miles away. With Tom Purdie, a reclaimed salmon poacher, as his factotum, he entered joyfully into every country sport. He was noted as a bold rider in a country of bold riders. "The de'il's in ye, Shirra," said Mungo Park's brother: "ye'll never halt till they bring you hame with your feet foremost." Scott himself has written of the delights of that simple life :—

On Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noonday solitude ;

By many a cairn and trenched mound,
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs, where grey-hair'd shepherds tell,
That still the fairies love to dwell.

Along the silver streams of Tweed,
Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,
When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings ;
The boiling eddy see him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide ;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear ;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,
Whether at Alwyn's lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of Ashestiel ;
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair !

It was a full life, for apart from his poetry he was busy with contributions to the reviews, and with an edition of Dryden. The fact was that, owing to his friendship with James Ballantyne, he was slowly being drawn into publishing ventures, for he had already entered into a secret partnership and invested a considerable sum of money in Ballantyne's printing business. A lawyer and a man of letters has no business to engage in commerce and take upon himself in-

definite responsibilities unless he can give his mind honestly to the subject. Scott trusted everything to Ballantyne, and was content to provide the literary material for the partners' press.

Lockhart has described the orderly busyness of Scott's habits at Ashestiel, habits which continued to the end of his days :—

> He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a martinet as to all but the mere coxcombries of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those "bed-gown and slipper tricks," as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Clad in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye, just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) "to break the neck of the day's work." After breakfast, a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, "his own man." When the weather was bad, he would labour incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest; while, if any more distant excursion had been proposed over night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favour, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.

In 1806 Scott's appointment as a Clerk of the Court of Session was gazetted, but the attainment of this

office was really his farewell to the legal profession, for his thoughts were now mainly on literature. The general admiration of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in which Fox and Pitt shared, induced him to continue his metrical romances, and he took as the subject for the second the most melancholy page in Scottish history—the battle of Flodden. *Marmion* was begun in the autumn of that year, and published early in 1808. Its success more than equalled that of its predecessor, though Lord Jeffrey criticized it unfavourably in the *Edinburgh Review*. It ranks in general estimation as the best of the poems, for though the plot is constructed with extreme carelessness, it abounds in noble passages. His story of Flodden is one of the finest battle-pieces in literature, and Scott never excelled the picture of the steel circle which died around the king :—

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
  Where Huntly, and where Home ?—
O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
  That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
  On Roncesvalles died !
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
  While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds and dies,
  Our Caledonian pride !

* * * * * * *

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd ;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring ;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight ;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well ;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands ;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.

But *Marmion* was only one of many literary enterprises. The *Life of Dryden* was published in the same year, and Scott became a voluminous contributor to Mr. Murray's new *Quarterly Review*. The confusion into which his brother's affairs had fallen made it necessary that he should increase his income, and he was full of literary schemes with his partner Ballantyne and Mr. Constable, the Edinburgh book publisher—schemes which involved him in almost unceasing labour. Part of this was undertaken with the design of helping struggling authors. " It was enough to tear me to pieces," he told Lockhart, " but there was

a wonderful exhilaration about it all ; my blood was kept at fever pitch ; I felt as if I could have grappled with anything and everything ; then there was hardly one of all my schemes that did not afford me the means of serving some poor devil of a brother author. There were always huge piles of materials to be arranged, sifted, and indexed—volumes of extracts to be transcribed—journeys to be made hither and thither for ascertaining little facts and dates—in short, I could commonly keep half a dozen of the ragged army of Parnassus in tolerable case."

Few men have been less subject to literary vanity than Walter Scott. One of his friends wrote, " Mr. Scott always seemed to me like a glass through which the rays of admiration passed without sensibly affecting him." Miss Joanna Baillie, the Scottish dramatist, visited him in 1808, and has recorded some of his talk :—

> Keenly enjoying literature as he did, and indulging his own love of it in perpetual composition, he always maintained the same estimate of it as subordinate and auxiliary to the purpose of life, and rather talked of men and events than of books and criticism. Literary fame, he always said, was a bright feather in the cap, but not a substantial cover of a well-protected head. This sound and manly feeling was what I have seen described by some of his biographers as *pride*, and it will always be thought so by those whose own *vanity* can only be gratified by the admiration of others, and who mistake shows for realities. None loved the admiration and applause of others more than Scott ; but it was to the love and applause of those he valued in return that he restricted the feeling—without restricting the kindness. Men who did not, or would not understand this, perpetually mistook him—and, after loading him with undesired eulogy, perhaps in his own house

neglected common attention or civility to other parts of his family. It was on such an occasion that I heard him murmur in my ear, "Author as I am, I wish these good people would recollect that I began with being a gentleman, and don't mean to give up the character." Such was all along his feeling, and this, with a slight prejudice common to Scotsmen in favour of ancient and respectable family descent, constituted what in Grub Street is called his *pride*. It was, at least, what Johnson would have justly called *defensive* pride. From all other, and still more from mere vanity, I never knew any man so remarkably free.

There is a portrait of Scott at this time, drawn, on one of his visits to England, by Miss Anna Seward, the "Swan of Lichfield," a correspondent of Dr. Johnson.

This proudest boast of the Caledonian muse is tall, (she says), and rather robust than slender, but lame in the same manner as Mr. Hayley, and in a greater measure. Neither the contour of his face nor yet his features are elegant; his complexion healthy, and somewhat fair, without bloom. We find the singularity of brown hair and eye-lashes, with flaxen eyebrows; and a countenance open, ingenuous, and benevolent. When seriously conversing or earnestly attentive, though his eyes are rather of a lightish grey, deep thought is on their lids; he contracts his brow, and the rays of genius gleam aslant from the orbs beneath them. An upper lip too long prevents his mouth from being decidedly handsome; but the sweetest emanations of temper and heart play about it when he talks cheerfully or smiles—and in company he is much oftener gay than contemplative—his conversation an overflowing fountain of brilliant wit, apposite allusion, and playful archness—while on serious themes it is nervous and eloquent; the accent decidedly Scotch, yet by no means broad. Not less astonishing than was Johnson's memory is that of Mr. Scott; like Johnson, also, his recitation is too monotonous and violent to do justice either to his own writings or those of others.

With all his preoccupations, Scott never neglected the simpler duties of life. He was the friend and benefactor of every man, woman, and child in his neighbourhood, and treated everybody as if they were kinsfolk. He had in the fullest degree that simple friendliness of manner which is a notable possession of the Scottish Borders, and he was entirely without stiffness or pedantry. As he once said, he had far too great a respect for his dignity ever to stand upon it. Here is Lockhart on his way of bringing up his family :—

> By many external accomplishments, either in girl or boy, he set little store. He delighted to hear his daughters sing an old ditty, or one of his own framing ; but, so the singer appeared to feel the spirit of her ballad, he was not at all critical of the technical execution. There was one thing, however, on which he fixed his heart hardly less than the ancient Persians of the Cyropædia ; like them, next to love of truth, he held love of horsemanship for the prime point of education. As soon as his eldest girl could sit a pony, she was made the regular attendant of his mountain rides ; and they all, as they attained sufficient strength, had the like advancement. He taught them to think nothing of tumbles, and habituated them to his own reckless delight in perilous fords and flooded streams ; and they all imbibed in great perfection his passion for horses—as well, I may venture to add, as his deep reverence for the more important article of that Persian training. "Without courage," he said, "there cannot be truth ; and without truth there can be no other virtue."

*The Lady of the Lake* was begun in 1809, after a visit to the Highlands, and appeared in May 1810. It had the greatest immediate success of all the poems, and at once made the Southern Highlands a place of pil-

grimage for English and foreign visitors. It is a most brilliant and vivacious romance, perhaps the freshest and most moving tale in verse since Chaucer. It is sufficient to quote the opening :—

> The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
> Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
> And deep his midnight lair had made
> In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
> But, when the sun his beacon red
> Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
> The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
> Resounded up the rocky way,
> And faint, from farther distance borne,
> Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.
>
> As Chief, who hears his warder call,
> " To arms ! the foemen storm the wall,"
> The antler'd monarch of the waste
> Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
> But, ere his fleet career he took,
> The dewdrops from his flanks he shook ;
> Like crested leader proud and high,
> Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky ;
> A moment gazed adown the dale,
> A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
> A moment listen'd to the cry,
> That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh ;
> Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
> With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
> And, stretching forward free and far,
> Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

Scott himself never rated his own poetical talent very high. He thought Joanna Baillie, whose work no one remembers to-day, the best living poet, and his own preference in verse was for the classic eighteenth-century manner as revealed in Johnson's *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes.* He once said: "As the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to

King George III. that he himself was never a Wilkesite, so I can, with honest truth, exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million." This indifference to his poetic fame was shared by his own family, as the following delightful anecdote from Lockhart shows :—

> In fact, his children in those days had no idea of the source of his distinction—or rather, indeed, that his position was in any respect different from that of other Advocates, Sheriffs, and Clerks of Session. The eldest boy came home one afternoon about this time from the High School, with tears and blood hardened together upon his cheeks.—" Well, Wat," said his father, " what have you been fighting about to-day? " With that the boy blushed and hung his head, and at last stammered out—that he had been called a *lassie*. " Indeed ! " said Mrs. Scott, " this was a terrible mischief to be sure." " You may say what you please, mamma," Wat answered roughly, " but I dinna think there's a *waufer* (shabbier) thing in the world than to be a lassie, to sit boring at a clout." Upon further inquiry it turned out that one or two of his companions had dubbed him *The Lady of the Lake*, and the phrase was to him incomprehensible, save as conveying some imputation on his prowess, which he accordingly vindicated in the usual style of the Yards. Of the poem he had never before heard. Shortly after, this story having got wind, one of Scott's colleagues of the Clerks' Table said to the boy—(who was in the home circle called Gilnockie, from his admiration of Johnny Armstrong)—" Gilnockie, my man, you cannot surely help seeing that great people make more work about your papa than they do about me or any other of your uncles—what is it, do you suppose, that occasions this ? " The little fellow pondered for a minute or two, and then answered very gravely—" It's commonly *him* that sees the hare sitting."

The rest of the world had a different opinion. Scott's friend, Sir Adam Fergusson, then serving with Wellington in the 58th Regiment, has recorded the reception of *The Lady of the Lake* among the troops in the Peninsula :—

> I was so fortunate as to get a reading of *The Lady of the Lake*, when in the lines of Torres Vedras, and thought I had no inconsiderable right to enter into and judge of its beauties, having made one of the party on your first visit to the Trossachs. While the book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations to evening parties ! and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt were always followed with bursts of applause—for this Canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the fighting Third Division. At that time supplies of various kinds were scanty ;—and, in gratitude, I am bound to declare that to the good offices of the Lady I owed many a nice slice of ham and rummer of hot punch.

We may glance here at the remainder of the poems. *Rokeby*, the result of a visit to his friend Morritt in the vale of Tees, appeared at the end of 1812. It is a halting tale—what its author called "a pseudo-romance of pseudo-chivalry"—but it contains some of the loveliest of his lyrics, such as—

> "A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
> A weary lot is thine !
> To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
> And press the rue for wine !
> A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
> A feather of the blue,
> A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
> No more of me you knew,
> My love !
> No more of me you knew.

" This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain ;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
Ere we two meet again."
He turn'd his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, " Adieu for evermore,
My love !
And adieu for evermore."—

Scott was offered the Poet Laureateship on the death of Pye, but declined it on the ground that he already held two other Government offices, and Southey was appointed. *The Bridal of Triermain* and *The Vision of Don Roderick* followed, neither in his best manner, and then, in 1815, the last of the long poems—*The Lord of the Isles*. By this time the great novels had begun, and poetry was no longer his chief pre-occupation. Moreover, the star of Byron had risen on the horizon, and that scarlet luminary had drawn the eyes of the multitude from Scott's paler and purer light. But *The Lord of the Isles* has a high quality of its own, and I cannot think that it has ever been given its proper rank in Scott's poetry. It deals with the most moving chapter in Scottish history—the fight of Bruce for independence—and we can hardly find a nobler expression of chivalry than the death of Argentine :—

Again he faced the battlefield,—
Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield.
" Now then," he said, and couch'd his spear,
" My course is run, the goal is near ;
One effort more, one brave career,
Must close this race of mine."
Then in his stirrups rising high,
He shouted loud his battle-cry,

" Saint James for Argentine ! "
And, of the bold pursuers, four
The gallant knight from saddle bore ;
But not unharmed—a lance's point
Has found his breastplate's loosen'd joint,
An axe has razed his crest ;
Yet still on Colonsay's fierce lord,
Who press'd the chase with gory sword,
He rode with spear in rest,
And through his bloody tartans bored,
And through his gallant breast.
Nail'd to the earth, the mountaineer
Yet writhed him up against the spear,
And swung his broadsword round !—
Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way
Beneath that blow's tremendous sway,
The blood gush'd from the wound ;
And the grim Lord of Colonsay
Hath turn'd him on the ground,
And laugh'd in death-pang, that his blade
The mortal thrust so well repaid.

Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
To use his conquest boldly won ;
And gave command for horse and spear
To press the Southron's scatter'd rear,
Nor let his broken force combine,
—When the war-cry of Argentine
Fell faintly on his ear !
" Save, save his life," he cried, " O save
The kind, the noble, and the brave ! "
The squadrons round free passage gave,
The wounded knight drew near ;
He raised his red-cross shield no more,
Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
Yet, as he saw the King advance,
He strove even then to couch his lance—
The effort was in vain !
The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse ;
Wounded and weary, in mid course
He stumbled on the plain.
Then foremost was the generous Bruce
To raise his head, his helm to loose :—

" Lord Earl, the day is thine !
My sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
Have made our meeting all too late :
  Yet this may Argentine,
As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave."

Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
Kindly replied ; but, in his clasp,
  It stiffen'd and grew cold—
And, " O farewell ! " the victor cried,
" Of chivalry the flower and pride,
  The arm in battle bold,
The courteous mien, the noble race,
The stainless faith, the manly face !—
Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine
For late-wake of De Argentine.
O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
Torch never gleam'd nor mass was said ! "

While on the subject of Scott's verse, it should be noted that he had Shakespeare's gift of writing unforgettable little snatches of song, which appear throughout the novels with exquisite and effortless aptness. I quote a few. One is from a set of verses written by the hero in *Waverley* :—

So, on the idle dreams of youth,
Breaks the loud trumpet-call of truth,
Bids each fair vision pass away,
Like landscape on the lake that lay,
As fair, as flitting, and as frail,
As that which fled the Autumn gale—
For ever dead to fancy's eye
Be each gay form that glided by,
While dreams of love and lady's charms
Give place to honour and to arms !

The second is Lucy Ashton's song in *The Bride of Lammermoor* :—

Look not thou on beauty's charming,
Sit thou still when kings are arming,

Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,
Speak not when the people listens,
Stop thine ear against the singer,
From the red gold keep thy finger—
Vacant heart, and hand, and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.

The third is sung by Claud Halcro in *The Pirate* :—

And you shall deal the funeral dole ;
Ay, deal it, mother mine,
To weary body, and to heavy soul,
The white bread and the wine.

And you shall deal my horses of pride ;
Ay, deal them, mother mine,
And you shall deal my lands so wide,
And deal my castles nine.

But deal not vengeance for the dead,
And deal not for the crime ;
The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
And the rest in God's own time.

The last and greatest is Madge Wildfire's dying song in *The Heart of Midlothian* :—

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early ;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me ?"—
"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly ?"
"The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly."

The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady ;
The owl from the steeple sing,
"Welcome, proud lady."

Meantime, between the years 1810 and 1814 Scott had been living a hard life. He toiled incessantly at his articles for the *Quarterly Review*, at his *Life of Swift*, and at many enterprises for the ill-omened publishing firm of which he was a partner. There was a moment when he was so depressed at his prospects that he thought of taking a post in India. Between 1805 and 1810 he contributed not less than £9,000 to the Ballantyne firm, which would have been shipwrecked but for the friendly interposition of Mr. Constable. Nevertheless, to avoid the hurried sale of his copyrights, he was obliged to obtain a loan of £4,000 from his friend, the Duke of Buccleuch, the head of his family.

In 1812 he had entered upon the full emoluments of his office as a Clerk of Session (which had hitherto been cumbered with payments to the former occupant), so that now he could count upon a professional salary of £1,600 a year. This assurance of a regular income induced him to take the fatal step of giving up Ashestiel and purchasing an estate. There were two little farms called Clarty[1] Hole and Kaeside on the right bank of the Tweed, a few miles above Melrose, where the last Border clan battle between the Scotts and the Kers had been fought. The place appealed to Scott's antiquarian imagination, and the countryside around was a treasure-house of legend, both of Border wars and fairy lore. The place, rechristened by Scott Abbotsford, lay in a meadow close to the edge of the Tweed, which there flows bright and clear over pebbles. It is not the most beautiful part of the

[1] *Anglice*, muddy.

Borderland, but to Scott it seemed paradise, and it pleased him to be regarded as a laird. His first conceptions of the house were modest. He wrote to Joanna Baillie : " My dreams about my cottage go on. My present intention is to have only two spare bedrooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will, on a pinch, have a couch bed ; but I cannot relinquish my Border principle of accommodating all the cousins and duniwastles, who will rather sleep on chairs, and on the floor, and in the hay-loft, than be absent when folks are gathered together ; and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Periebanou, in *The Arabian Nights*, that suited alike all numbers of company equally ; ten people fill it at any time, and I remember its lodging thirty-two without any complaint."

Scott had settled in Abbotsford, then in its first modest beginnings, in the summer of 1812. A letter to Lady Alvanley describes his " flitting " :—

> The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux chevalier* of ancient Border fame ; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gipsy groups of Callot upon their march.

The next two years were busy and anxious. He finished his *Life of Swift*, and his edition of Swift's

works in nineteen volumes; completed his later poems, and in term time spent five days a week at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Meantime he was occupied with planting and building at Abbotsford, and with endless worries about the Ballantyne firm. In 1813 he had much food for thought. His fame as a poet was declining, and with it his income. The prospects of the publishing business were not rosy, though he did not realize their dire confusion, and he had an estate which, even on the most moderate scale, required a considerable expenditure before it could approximate to his dream. One day that year, hunting for some fishing tackle in an old bureau, he came across the manuscript of the first chapters of a novel called *Waverley*, which he had begun in 1805 and laid aside. He had looked at it again in 1810, and had thought little of it. Now, however, it seemed that something might be done with it, for English fiction at the moment was in a parlous state. The great days of Richardson and Fielding and Miss Burney were over. Mrs. Radcliffe, with her tales of terror, had lost her vogue, and only Miss Edgeworth was still writing. "Novels," said Scott's friend Morritt, "were abandoned to the Lydia Languishes and their maids," and were disdained by the serious book-buying public. Scott took the opinion of his friends, who pronounced well of the early chapters, and he set himself to finish it. In three summer weeks in 1814 he completed the novel, mostly at his house in North Castle Street, and Lockhart, then a young man but lately come to Edinburgh from Oxford, has recorded the sight of Walter Scott at work :—

It was a party of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the Bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday, or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will." I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. "Since we sat down," he said, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS. and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand a sight of it when I am not at my books."—"Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably," exclaimed myself, or some other giddy youth in our society. "No, boys," said our host, "I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's." This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the two last volumes of *Waverley*.

Scott had found the key to a new treasure-house of strange and inexhaustible riches. On the 7th of July, 1814, *Waverley* was published anonymously, and when he returned from a cruise round the Northern lighthouses he found that his first novel had taken the world by storm.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FIRST WAVERLEY NOVELS

Between 1814 and the close of 1816 appeared *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, and *Old Mortality*, four of which are among the great novels of the world. Few men have been better equipped than Scott for the task of novelist. To begin with, he had been from his earliest youth a skilled story-teller. Again, from his huge antiquarian reading, he was perfectly equipped for the reproduction of historical scenes and an older life. Moreover, his easy friendliness with every class and condition of society, his love of the ordinary man, his quick perception of everyday humours and oddities, made him an adept in the drawing of character. In his new career he was to find means of using all the varied learning and fantastic memories which he had accumulated in the past forty years.

These qualities alone, however, would not have made him a great writer, and it may be well at this point to consider briefly wherein consists Scott's greatness as an imaginative artist. He is not a novelist of manners, like Samuel Richardson or Miss Austen. He selected a particular kind of subject—the rougher and stranger and more coloured aspects of life, the subjects which we call "romantic." That word, when he began to write, was getting a bad name, for it was associated with the feebly fantastic in the writings of Mrs. Radcliffe and Horace Walpole and "Monk" Lewis. Scott gave it a new definition. He

showed that beauty and terror could be made credible, because he made them the natural outcome, as in a Greek tragedy, of the clash of character. To do this, he had to develop his characters so that they stood out alive and four-square in his narrative, and he had to keep that narrative always in touch with ordinary life. His greatness consists in the fact that to a soaring imagination and profound emotions he joined common sense—the vision of the plain man : that he was an adventurer and dreamer who never forgot the standards of ordinary humanity.

In all his work he has a foundation of plain good sense. He never loses his head. The fantastic and the grotesque are heightened in their effect by being shown against this quiet background. Further, they are made credible by being thus linked to our ordinary world. He is a master of the eccentric and the uncanny, just because his outlook is so sane and central, for only a mind solidly founded on fact can bring mystery out of cloudland into our common life. Even when he is a seer, dreaming strange dreams, he is also a Scots lawyer considering his case.

This is well illustrated by his treatment of his Scottish peasants. His kinship to the soil is so close that in their portraiture he never fumbles. He gives us every variety of peasant life—the sordid, the meanly humorous, the greatly humorous, the austere, the heroic. In the last sphere of all he was a special master. Because he made his plain folk so robustly alive, because his comprehension of them was so complete, he could raise them at the great moment to the heroic without straining our belief in them. Others might make the peasant a pathetic or a humorous or

a lovable figure, but Scott could make him also sublime without departing from the strictest faithfulness in portraying him. It should be noted that it is to his peasants that he gives nearly all the most moving speeches in the novels. He is quite incapable of patronage or condescension ; he exalts his characters at the fitting moment because he knows the capacity for greatness in ordinary human nature.

Scott transforms life, as is the duty of a great artist. He enlarges our view and makes the world at once more solemn and more sunlit, but it remains a recognizable world, with all the old familiar landmarks. He has that touch of the prosaic in him without which romance becomes only a fairy tale and tragedy a high-heeled strutting. For the kernel of romance is contrast—beauty and valour flowering in unlikely places, the heavenly rubbing shoulders with the earthly. All romance, all tragedy, must be within hailing distance of our humdrum lives. We find it in the Ballads, this startling common sense linking fact and dream. We find it in Shakespeare, who can make Cleopatra pass from banter with a peasant to the loftiest of human soliloquies.—" Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there ? . . . Those that do die of it do seldom or never recover. . . . I wish you joy o' the worm." And then—

> Give me my robe, put on my crown ; I have
> Immortal longings in me.

We find it in Scott, whose broad, sane vision saw that tragedy and comedy are sisters, and that, like Antæus, neither can live without the touch of her mother, the earth.

*Waverley* was his first attempt, and there are imperfections in it which do not appear in the later masterpieces. The beginning is terribly spun out, and the hero, Edward Waverley, is not sympathetic. The story is a little tangled, and only towards the end do we feel the rush of Scott's true epic spirit. Nevertheless it remains one of the great novels, for few books present a more brilliant picture of a tense historical moment and the tragedy of a lost cause. Scott has drawn the impracticable chivalry and poetry of the Highlands in contrast with the matter-of-factness of the Lowland character. As in all his novels, it is in the lesser figures that we find the most masterly drawing—Bailie MacWheeble, the Gifted Gilfillan, Callum Beg, Alick Polwarth, the Baron of Bradwardine, Balmawhapple, Evan Dhu Maccombich. As in all his novels, too, there is a profound comprehension of the merits of the different points of view, however fiercely they may clash in action. As an example of his humour, let me quote the scene where Waverley is a prisoner in the hands of the rigid Presbyterian Gilfillan, and is suddenly rescued by the Highlanders :—

The dinner hour of Scotland sixty years since was two o'clock. It was therefore about four o'clock of a delightful autumn afternoon that Mr. Gilfillan commenced his march, in hopes, although Stirling was eighteen miles distant, that he might be able, by becoming a borrower of the night for an hour or two, to reach it that evening. He therefore put forth his strength, and marched stoutly along at the head of his followers, eyeing our hero from time to time, as if he longed to enter into controversy with him. At length, unable

to resist the temptation, he slackened his pace till he was alongside of his prisoner's horse, and after marching a few steps in silence abreast of him, he suddenly asked, "Can ye say wha the carle was wi' the black coat and the mousted[1] head, that was wi' the Laird of Cairnvreckan?"

"A Presbyterian clergyman," answered Waverley.

"Presbyterian!" answered Gilfillan contemptuously; "a wretched Erastian, or rather an obscured Prelatist,—a favourer of the black Indulgence; ane of thae dumb dogs that canna bark; they tell ower a clash o' terror and a clatter o' comfort in their sermons, without ony sense, or savour, or life.—Ye've been fed in siccan a fauld,[2] belike?"

"No; I am of the Church of England," said Waverley.

"And they're just neighbour-like," replied the Covenanter; "and nae wonder they gree sae weel. Wha wad hae thought the goodly structure of the Kirk of Scotland, built up by our fathers in 1642, wad hae been defaced by carnal ends and the corruptions of the time;—ay, wha wad hae thought the carved work of the sanctuary would hae been sae soon cut down!"

To this lamentation, which one or two of the assistants chorused with a deep groan, our hero thought it unnecessary to make any reply. Whereupon Mr. Gilfillan, resolving that he should be a hearer at least, if not a disputant, proceeded in his Jeremiad.

"And now is it wonderful, when, for lack of exercise anent the call to the service of the altar and the duty of the day, ministers fall into sinful compliances with patronage, and indemnities, and oaths, and bonds, and other corruptions,—is it wonderful, I say, that you, sir, and other sic-like unhappy persons, should labour to build up your auld Babel of iniquity, as in the bluidy persecuting saint-killing times? I trow,

[1] Powdered. [2] Such a fold.

gin ye werena blinded wi' the graces and favours, and services and enjoyments, and employments and inheritances, of this wicked world, I could prove to you, by the Scripture, in what a filthy rag ye put your trust; and that your surplices, and your copes and vestments, are but cast-off garments of the muckle harlot, that sitteth upon seven hills, and drinketh of the cup of abomination. But, I trow ye are deaf as adders upon that side of the head; ay, ye are deceived with her enchantments, and ye traffic with her merchandise, and ye are drunk with the cup of her fornication!"

How much longer this military theologist might have continued his invective, in which he spared nobody but the scattered remnant of hill-folk, as he called them, is absolutely uncertain. His matter was copious, his voice powerful, and his memory strong; so that there was little chance of his ending his exhortation till the party had reached Stirling, had not his attention been attracted by a pedlar who had joined the march from a cross-road, and who sighed or groaned with great regularity at all fitting pauses of his homily.

"And what may ye be, friend?" said the Gifted Gilfillan.

"A puir pedlar, that's bound for Stirling, and craves the protection of your honour's party in these kittle[1] times. Ah! your honour has a notable faculty in searching and explaining the secret,—ay, the secret and obscure and incomprehensible causes of the backslidings of the land; ay, your honour touches the root o' the matter."

"Friend," said Gilfillan, with a more complacent voice than he had hitherto used, "honour not me. I do not go out to park-dikes, and to steadings, and to market-towns, to have herds and cottars and burghers pull off their bonnets to me as they do to Major Mel-

[1] Difficult.

ville o' Cairnvreckan, and ca' me laird, or captain, or honour ;—no ; my sma' means, whilk are not aboon twenty thousand merks, have had the blessing of increase, but the pride of my heart has not increased with them ; nor do I delight to be called captain, though I have the subscribed commission of that gospel-searching nobleman, the Earl of Glencairn, in whilk I am so designated. While I live, I am and will be called Habakkuk Gilfillan, who will stand up for the standards of doctrine agreed on by the ance-famous Kirk of Scotland, before she trafficked with the accursed Achan, while he has a plack in his purse, or a drap o' bluid in his body."

" Ah," said the pedlar, " I have seen your land about Mauchlin—a fertile spot ! your lines have fallen in pleasant places !—And siccan a breed o' cattle is not in ony laird's land in Scotland."

" Ye say right,—ye say right, friend," retorted Gilfillan eagerly, for he was not inaccessible to flattery upon this subject,—" Ye say right ; they are the real Lancashire, and there's no the like o' them even at the Mains of Kilmaurs;" and he then entered into a discussion of their excellences, to which our readers will probably be as indifferent as our hero. After this excursion, the leader returned to his theological discussions, while the pedlar, less profound upon these mystic points, contented himself with groaning, and expressing his edification at suitable intervals.

" What a blessing it would be to the puir blinded popish nations among whom I hae sojourned, to have siccan a light to their paths ! I hae been as far as Muscovia in my sma' trading way, as a travelling merchant ; and I hae been through France, and the Low Countries, and a' Poland, and maist feck [1] o' Germany, and oh ! it would grieve your honour's soul to

[1] Part.

see the murmuring, and the singing, and massing, that's in the kirk, and the piping that's in the quire, and the heathenish dancing and dicing upon the Sabbath ! "

This set Gilfillan off upon the Book of Sports and the Covenant, and the Engagers, and the Protesters, and the Whiggamore's Raid, and the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and the Longer and Shorter Catechisms, and the Excommunication at Torwood, and the slaughter of Archbishop Sharp. This last topic, again, led him into the lawfulness of defensive arms, on which subject he uttered much more sense than could have been expected from some other parts of his harangue, and attracted even Waverley's attention, who had hitherto been lost in his own sad reflections. Mr. Gilfillan then considered the lawfulness of a private man's standing forth as the avenger of public oppression, and as he was labouring with great earnestness the cause of Mass James Mitchell, who fired at the Archbishop of St. Andrews some years before the prelate's assassination on Magus Muir, an incident occurred which interrupted his harangue.

The rays of the sun were lingering on the very verge of the horizon, as the party ascended a hollow and somewhat steep path, which led to the summit of a rising ground. The country was unenclosed, being part of a very extensive heath or common ; but it was far from level, exhibiting in many places hollows filled with furze and broom ; in others, little dingles of stunted brushwood. A thicket of the latter description crowned the hill up which the party ascended. The foremost of the band, being the stoutest and most active, had pushed on, and, having surmounted the ascent, were out of ken for the present. Gilfillan, with the pedlar, and the small party who were Waverley's more immediate guard, were near the top of the ascent, and the remainder straggled after them at a considerable interval.

Such was the situation of matters, when the pedlar, missing, as he said, a little doggie which belonged to him, began to halt and whistle for the animal. This signal, repeated more than once, gave offence to the rigour of his companion, the rather because it appeared to indicate inattention to the treasures of theological and controversial knowledge which was pouring out for his edification. He therefore signified gruffly, that he could not waste his time in waiting for a useless cur.

"But if your honour wad consider the case of Tobit——"

"Tobit!" exclaimed Gilfillan, with great heat; "Tobit and his dog baith are altogether heathenish and apocryphal, and none but a prelatist or a papist would draw them into question. I doubt I hae been mista'en in you, friend."

"Very likely," answered the pedlar, with great composure; "but, ne'ertheless, I shall take leave to whistle again upon puir Bawty."

This last signal was answered in an unexpected manner; for six or eight stout Highlanders, who lurked among the copse and brushwood, sprang into the hollow way, and began to lay about them with their claymores. Gilfillan, unappalled at this undesirable apparition, cried out manfully, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" and, drawing his broadsword, would probably have done as much credit to the good old cause as any of its doughty champions at Drumclog, when, behold! the pedlar, snatching a musket from the person who was next him, bestowed the butt of it with such emphasis on the head of his late instructor in the Cameronian creed, that he was forthwith levelled to the ground. In the confusion which ensued, the horse which bore our hero was shot by one of Gilfillan's party, as he discharged his firelock at random. Waverley fell with, and indeed under, the animal, and sustained some severe con-

tusions. But he was almost instantly extricated from the fallen steed by two Highlanders, who, each seizing him by the arm, hurried him away from the scuffle and from the high-road.

My second quotation is the tale of the death of Fergus MacIvor at Carlisle, where Scott rises to a great tragic moment :—

In about an hour he was re-admitted ; soon after, a file of soldiers entered with a blacksmith, who struck the fetters from the legs of the prisoners.

" You see the compliment they pay to our Highland strength and courage—we have lain chained here like wild beasts, till our legs are cramped into palsy, and when they free us, they send six soldiers with loaded muskets to prevent our taking the Castle by storm ! "

Edward afterwards learned that these severe precautions had been taken in consequence of a desperate attempt of the prisoners to escape, in which they had very nearly succeeded.

Shortly afterwards the drums of the garrison beat to arms. " This is the last turn-out," said Fergus, " that I shall hear and obey. And now, my dear, dear Edward, ere we part let us speak of Flora—a subject which awakes the tenderest feeling that yet thrills within me."

" We part not *here !* " said Waverley.

" Oh yes, we do ; you must come no farther. Not that I fear what is to follow for myself," he said proudly ; " Nature has her tortures as well as art ; and how happy should we think the man who escaped from the throes of a mortal and painful disorder, in the space of a short half-hour ? And this matter, spin it out as they will, cannot last longer. But what a dying man can suffer firmly, may kill a living friend to look upon.—This same law of high treason," he

continued, with astonishing firmness and composure, " is one of the blessings, Edward, with which your free country has accommodated poor old Scotland—her own jurisprudence, as I have heard, was much milder. But I suppose one day or other—when there are no longer any wild Highlanders to benefit by its tender mercies—they will blot it from their records, as levelling them with a nation of cannibals. The mummery, too, of exposing the senseless head—they have not the wit to grace mine with a paper coronet ; there would be some satire in that, Edward. I hope they will set it on the Scotch gate though, that I may look, even after death, to the blue hills of my own country, which I love so dearly. The Baron would have added,

'Moritur, et moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.' "

A bustle, and the sound of wheels and horses' feet, was now heard in the courtyard of the Castle. " As I have told you why you must not follow me, and these sounds admonish me that my time flies fast, tell me how you found poor Flora ? "

Waverley, with a voice interrupted by suffocating sensations, gave some account of the state of her mind.

" Poor Flora ! " answered the Chief, " she could have borne her own sentence of death, but not mine. You, Waverley, will soon know the happiness of mutual affection in the married state—long, long may Rose and you enjoy it !—but you can never know the purity of feeling which combines two orphans like Flora and me, left alone as it were in the world, and being all in all to each other from our very infancy. But her strong sense of duty, and predominant feeling of loyalty, will give new nerve to her mind after the immediate and acute sensation of this parting has passed away. She will then think of Fergus as of the heroes of our race, upon whose deeds she loved to dwell."

"Shall she not see you, then?" asked Waverley. "She seemed to expect it."

"A necessary deceit will spare her the last dreadful parting. I could not part with her without tears, and I cannot bear that these men should think they have power to extort them. She was made to believe she would see me at a later hour, and this letter, which my confessor will deliver, will apprise her that all is over."

An officer now appeared, and intimated that the High Sheriff and his attendants waited before the gate of the Castle, to claim the bodies of Fergus MacIvor and Evan Maccombich. "I come," said Fergus. Accordingly, supporting Edward by the arm, and followed by Evan Dhu and the priest, he moved down the stairs of the tower, the soldiers bringing up the rear. The court was occupied by a squadron of dragoons and a battalion of infantry, drawn up in hollow square. Within their ranks was the sledge, or hurdle, on which the prisoners were to be drawn to the place of execution, about a mile distant from Carlisle. It was painted black, and drawn by a white horse. At one end of the vehicle sat the executioner, a horrid-looking fellow, as beseemed his trade, with the broad axe in his hand; at the other end, next the horse, was an empty seat for two persons. Through the deep and dark Gothic archway, that opened on the drawbridge, were seen on horseback the High Sheriff and his attendants, whom the etiquette betwixt the civil and military powers did not permit to come farther. "This is well got up for a closing scene," said Fergus, smiling disdainfully as he gazed around upon the apparatus of terror. Evan Dhu exclaimed with some eagerness, after looking at the dragoons, "These are the very chields that galloped off at Gladsmuir, before we could kill a dozen o' them. They look bold enough now, however." The priest entreated him to be silent.

The sledge now approached, and Fergus, turning

round, embraced Waverley, kissed him on each side of the face, and stepped nimbly into his place. Evan sat down by his side. The priest was to follow in a carriage belonging to his patron, the Catholic gentleman at whose house Flora resided. As Fergus waved his hand to Edward, the ranks closed around the sledge, and the whole procession began to move forward. There was a momentary stop at the gateway, while the governor of the Castle and the High Sheriff went through a short ceremony, the military officer there delivering over the persons of the criminals to the civil power. "God save King George!" said the High Sheriff. When the formality concluded, Fergus stood erect in the sledge, and, with a firm and steady voice, replied, "God save King James!" These were the last words which Waverley heard him speak.

The procession resumed its march, and the sledge vanished from beneath the portal, under which it had stopped for an instant. The dead-march was then heard, and its melancholy sounds were mingled with those of a muffled peal, tolled from the neighbouring cathedral. The sound of the military music died away as the procession moved on; the sullen clang of the bells was soon heard to sound alone.

*Guy Mannering*, which appeared in 1815, was a novel of contemporary or almost contemporary life, based upon a story which Scott heard in Galloway. The plot is an ancient one, a version of the "missing heir," but the vivacity and strength of the characters, and the whole wonderful picture of gipsy, smuggling, and Border life atone for any defects in the tale. In *Guy Mannering* will be found such familiar figures as Dominie Sampson, Meg Merrilies the gipsy, and the Liddesdale farmer, Dandie Dinmont, a type whom Scott had often met in his early Border wanderings.

The novel contains some of the greatest scenes in fiction, notably that in which Meg Merrilies bids farewell to Ellangowan, which many good critics have considered the high-water mark of Scott's prose.

She was standing upon one of those high precipitous banks, which, as we before noticed, overhung the road; so that she was placed considerably higher than Ellangowan, even though he was on horseback; and her tall figure, relieved against the clear blue sky, seemed almost of supernatural stature. We have noticed, that there was in her general attire, or rather in her mode of adjusting it, somewhat of a foreign costume, artfully adopted perhaps for the purpose of adding to the effect of her spells and predictions, or perhaps from some traditional notions respecting the dress of her ancestors. On this occasion, she had a large piece of red cotton cloth rolled about her head in the form of a turban, from beneath which her dark eyes flashed with uncommon lustre. Her long and tangled black hair fell in elf-locks from the folds of this singular head-gear. Her attitude was that of a sibyl in frenzy, and she stretched out, in her right hand, a sapling bough which seemed just pulled.

"I'll be d——d," said the groom, "if she has not been cutting the young ashes in the Dukit park!"—The Laird made no answer, but continued to look at the figure which was thus perched upon his path.

"Ride your ways," said the gipsy, "ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan—ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram!—This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack[1] off seven cottar houses—look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster.—Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh—see that the hare does not couch on

[1] Thatch.

the hearthstane at Ellangowan.—Ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram—what do ye glower after our folk for? There's thirty hearts there, that wad hae wanted bread ere ye had wanted sunkets,[1] and spent their life-blood ere ye had scratched your finger. Yes, there's thirty yonder, from the auld wife of an hundred to the babe that was born last week, that ye have turned out o' their bits o' bields, to sleep with the tod[2] and the black-cock in the muirs!—Ride your ways, Ellangowan.—Our bairns are hinging at our weary backs—look that your braw cradle at hame be the fairer spread up—not that I am wishing ill to little Harry, or to the babe that's yet to be born—God forbid—and make them kind to the poor, and better folk than their father!—And now, ride e'en your ways; for these are the last words ye'll ever hear Meg Merrilies speak, and this is the last reise[3] that I'll ever cut in the bonny woods of Ellangowan."

As a pendant to this I quote the scene of the death of Meg Merrilies in the cavern at the hands of Dirk Hatteraick—such a "recognition" scene as that which Aristotle considered the culminating point of tragic art.

Meg Merrilies, who led the van . . . having already gained the place where the cavern expanded, had risen upon her feet. She began, as if to confound any listening ear, to growl, to mutter, and to sing aloud, and at the same time to make a bustle among some brushwood which was now heaped in the cave.

"Here—beldam—Deyvil's kind," growled the harsh voice of Dirk Hatteraick from the inside of his den, "what makest thou there?"

"Laying the roughies[4] to keep the cauld wind frae

[1] Delicacies.
[2] Fox.
[3] Stick.
[4] Withered boughs.

you, ye desperate do-nae-good.—Ye're e'en ower weel off, and wots[1] na ; it will be otherwise soon."

" Have you brought me the brandy, and any news of my people ? " said Dirk Hatteraick.

" There's the flask for ye. Your people—dispersed —broken—gone—or cut to ribbands by the redcoats."

" Der deyvil !—this coast is fatal to me."

" Ye may hae mair reason to say sae."

While this dialogue went forward, Bertram and Dinmont had both gained the interior of the cave, and assumed an erect position. The only light which illuminated its rugged and sable precincts was a quantity of wood burnt to charcoal in an iron grate, such as they use in spearing salmon by night. On these red embers Hatteraick from time to time threw a handful of twigs or splintered wood ; but these, even when they blazed up, afforded a light much disproportioned to the extent of the cavern ; and, as its principal inhabitant lay upon the side of the grate most remote from the entrance, it was not easy for him to discover distinctly objects which lay in that direction. The intruders, therefore, whose number was now augmented unexpectedly to three, stood behind the loosely-piled branches with little risk of discovery. Dinmont had the sense to keep back Hazlewood with one hand till he whispered to Bertram, " A friend—young Hazlewood."

It was no time for following up the introduction, and they all stood as still as the rocks around them, obscured behind the pile of brushwood, which had been probably placed there to break the cold wind from the sea, without totally intercepting the supply of air. The branches were laid so loosely above each other, that, looking through them towards the light of the fire-grate, they could easily discover what passed in its vicinity, although a much stronger de-

[1] Knows.

gree of illumination than it afforded, would not have enabled the persons placed near the bottom of the cave to have descried them in the position which they occupied.

The scene, independent of the peculiar moral interest and personal danger which attended it, had, from the effect of the light and shade on the uncommon objects which it exhibited, an appearance emphatically dismal. The light in the fire-grate was the dark-red glare of charcoal in a state of ignition, relieved from time to time by a transient flame of a more vivid or duskier light, as the fuel with which Dirk Hatteraick fed his fire was better or worse fitted for his purpose. Now a dark cloud of stifling smoke rose up to the roof of the cavern, and then lighted into a reluctant and sullen blaze, which flashed wavering up the pillar of smoke, and was suddenly rendered brighter and more lively by some drier fuel, or perhaps some splintered fir-timber, which at once converted the smoke into flame. By such fitful irradiation, they could see, more or less distinctly, the form of Hatteraick, whose savage and rugged cast of features, now rendered yet more ferocious by the circumstances of his situation, and the deep gloom of his mind, assorted well with the rugged and broken vault, which rose in a rude arch over and around him. The form of Meg Merrilies, which stalked about him, sometimes in the light, sometimes partially obscured in the smoke or darkness, contrasted strongly with the sitting figure of Hatteraick as he bent over the flame, and from his stationary posture was constantly visible to the spectator, while that of the female flitted around, appearing or disappearing like a spectre.

Bertram felt his blood boil at the sight of Hatteraick. He remembered him well under the name of Jansen, which the smuggler had adopted after the death of Kennedy; and he remembered also, that this Jansen, and his mate Brown, the same who was

shot at Woodbourne, had been the brutal tyrants of his infancy. Bertram knew farther, from piecing his own imperfect recollections with the narratives of Mannering and Pleydell, that this man was the prime agent in the act of violence which tore him from his family and country, and had exposed him to so many distresses and dangers. A thousand exasperating reflections rose within his bosom ; and he could hardly refrain from rushing upon Hatteraick and blowing his brains out.

At the same time this would have been no safe adventure. The flame, as it rose and fell, while it displayed the strong, muscular, and broad-chested frame of the ruffian, glanced also upon two brace of pistols in his belt, and upon the hilt of his cutlass ; it was not to be doubted that his desperation was commensurate with his personal strength and means of resistance. Both, indeed, were inadequate to encounter the combined power of two such men as Bertram himself and his friend Dinmont, without reckoning their unexpected assistant Hazlewood, who was unarmed, and of a slighter make; but Bertram felt, on a moment's reflection, that there would be neither sense nor valour in anticipating the hangman's office, and he considered the importance of making Hatteraick prisoner alive. He therefore repressed his indignation, and awaited what should pass between the ruffian and his gipsy guide.

" And how are ye now ? " said the harsh and discordant tones of his female attendant : " Said I not it would come upon you—ay, and in this very cave, where ye harboured after the deed ? "

" Wetter and sturm, ye hag ! " replied Hatteraick, "keep your deyvil's matins till they're wanted. Have you seen Glossin ? "

" No," replied Meg Merrilies : " you've missed your blow, ye bloodspiller ! and ye have nothing to expect from the tempter."

"Hagel!" exclaimed the ruffian, "if I had him but by the throat!—and what am I to do then?"

"Do?" answered the gipsy; "Die like a man, or be hanged like a dog!"

"Hanged, ye hag of Satan!—the hemp's not sown that shall hang me."

"It's sown, and it's grown, and it's heckled, and it's twisted. Did I not tell ye, when ye wad take away the boy Harry Bertram, in spite of my prayers,—did I not say he would come back when he had dree'd his weird[1] in foreign land till his twenty-first year?—Did I not say the auld fire would burn down to a spark, but wad kindle again?"

"Well, mother, you did say so," said Hatteraick, in a tone that had something of despair in its accents; "and, donner and blitzen! I believe you spoke the truth—that younker of Ellangowan has been a rock ahead to me all my life! and now, with Glossin's cursed contrivance, my crew have been cut off, my boats destroyed, and I dare say the lugger's taken—there were not men enough left on board to work her, far less to fight her—a dredge-boat might have taken her. And what will the owners say?—Hagel and sturm! I shall never dare go back again to Flushing."

"You'll never need," said the gipsy.

"What are you doing there," said her companion, "and what makes you say that?"

During this dialogue, Meg was heaping some flax loosely together. Before answering this question, she dropped a firebrand upon the flax, which had been previously steeped in some spirituous liquor, for it instantly caught fire, and rose in a vivid pyramid of the most brilliant light up to the very top of the vault. As it ascended, Meg answered the ruffian's question in a firm and steady voice:—"*Because the Hour's come, and the Man.*"

[1] Fulfilled his fate

At the appointed signal, Bertram and Dinmont sprung over the brushwood, and rushed upon Hatteraick. Hazlewood, unacquainted with their plan of assault, was a moment later. The ruffian, who instantly saw he was betrayed, turned his first vengeance on Meg Merrilies, at whom he discharged a pistol. She fell, with a piercing and dreadful cry, between the shriek of pain and the sound of laughter, when at its highest and most suffocating height. "I kenn'd it would be this way," she said.

Bertram, in his haste, slipped his foot upon the uneven rock which floored the cave; a fortunate stumble, for Hatteraick's second bullet whistled over him with so true and steady an aim, that had he been standing upright, it must have lodged in his brain. Ere the smuggler could draw another pistol, Dinmont closed with him, and endeavoured by main force to pinion down his arms. Such, however, was the wretch's personal strength, joined to the efforts of his despair, that, in spite of the gigantic force with which the Borderer grappled him, he dragged Dinmont through the blazing flax, and had almost succeeded in drawing a third pistol, which might have proved fatal to the honest farmer, had not Bertram, as well as Hazlewood, come to his assistance, when, by main force, and no ordinary exertion of it, they threw Hatteraick on the ground, disarmed him, and bound him. This scuffle, though it takes up some time in the narrative, passed in less than a single minute. When he was fairly mastered, after one or two desperate and almost convulsionary struggles, the ruffian lay perfectly still and silent. "He's gaun to die game onyhow," said Dinmont; "weel, I like him na the waur for that."

This observation honest Dandie made while he was shaking the blazing flax from his rough coat and shaggy black hair, some of which had been singed in the scuffle. "He is quiet now," said Bertram; "stay

by him, and do not permit him to stir till I see whether the poor woman be alive or dead." With Hazlewood's assistance he raised Meg Merrilies.

"I kenn'd it would be this way," she muttered, "and it's e'en this way that it should be."

*The Antiquary* was published in May 1816—another novel of contemporary life, and into the chief character, the antiquary Monkbarns, Scott put much of himself. The peasants, such as Elspeth of the Craigburnfoot, Mucklebackit, and the village gossips, Mrs. Mailsetter and Mrs. Heukbane, are done with incomparable skill. The novel contains the best ballad which Scott ever wrote, Elspeth's "Ballad of the Red Harlaw," which is in true succession to *Otterburn* and *Kinmont Willie*. The best-known figure is the beggar, Edie Ochiltree, who has no belongings but a blue gown and a wallet, but into whose mouth is put one of the classic expressions of a passionate patriotism, and who, in the famous scene in the storm, speaks words which, while wholly and exquisitely in character, are yet part of the world's poetry. Here is the scene :—

The howling of the storm mingled with the shrieks of the sea-fowl, and sounded like the dirge of the three devoted beings, who, pent between two of the most magnificent, yet most dreadful objects of nature—a raging tide and an insurmountable precipice—toiled along their painful and dangerous path, often lashed by the spray of some giant billow, which threw itself higher on the beach than those that had preceded it. Each minute did their enemy gain ground perceptibly upon them ! Still, however, loath to relinquish the last hopes of life, they bent their eyes on the black

rock pointed out by Ochiltree. It was yet distinctly visible among the breakers, and continued to be so, until they came to a turn in their precarious path, where an intervening projection of rock hid it from their sight. Deprived of the view of the beacon on which they had relied, they now experienced the double agony of terror and suspense. They struggled forward, however; but, when they arrived at the point from which they ought to have seen the crag, it was no longer visible. The signal of safety was lost among a thousand white breakers, which, dashing upon the point of the promontory, rose in prodigious sheets of snowy foam, as high as the mast of a first-rate man-of-war, against the dark brow of the precipice.

The countenance of the old man fell. Isabella gave a faint shriek, and, "God have mercy upon us!" which her guide solemnly uttered, was piteously echoed by Sir Arthur—"My child! my child!—to die such a death!"

"My father! my dear father!" his daughter exclaimed, clinging to him,—"and you too, who have lost your own life in endeavouring to save ours!"

"That's not worth the counting," said the old man. "I hae lived to be weary o' life; and here or yonder—at the back o' a dyke, in a wreath o' snaw, or in the wame [1] o' a wave, what signifies how the auld gaberlunzie [2] dies?"

"Good man," said Sir Arthur, "can you think of nothing?—of no help?—I'll make you rich—I'll give you a farm—I'll——"

"Our riches will be soon equal," said the beggar, looking out upon the strife of the waters—"they are sae already; for I hae nae land, and you would give your fair bounds and barony for a square yard of rock that would be dry for twal hours."

[1] Belly. [2] Beggar.

While they exchanged these words, they paused upon the highest ledge of rock to which they could attain; for it seemed that any further attempt to move forward could only serve to anticipate their fate. Here, then, they were to await the sure though slow progress of the raging element, something in the situation of the martyrs of the early church, who, exposed by heathen tyrants to be slain by wild beasts, were compelled for a time to witness the impatience and rage by which the animals were agitated, while awaiting the signal for undoing their grates, and letting them loose upon the victims.

Yet even this fearful pause gave Isabella time to collect the powers of a mind naturally strong and courageous, which rallied itself at this terrible juncture. "Must we yield life," she said, "without a struggle? Is there no path, however dreadful, by which we could climb the crag, or at least attain some height above the tide, where we could remain till morning, or till help comes? They must be aware of our situation, and will raise the country to relieve us."

Sir Arthur, who heard, but scarcely comprehended, his daughter's question, turned, nevertheless, instinctively and eagerly to the old man, as if their lives were in his gift. Ochiltree paused. "I was a bauld craigsman," he said, "ance in my life, and mony a kittywake's and lungie's nest hae I harried up amang thae very black rocks; but it's lang, lang syne, and nae mortal could speel[1] them without a rope—and if I had ane, my ee-sight, and my foot-step, and my hand-grip, hae a' failed mony a day sinsyne—and then how could I save *you?*—But there was a path here ance, though maybe, if we could see it, ye would rather bide where we are—His name be praised!" he ejaculated suddenly, "there's ane coming down the crag e'en now!"—Then, exalting his voice, he hilloa'd

[1] Climb.

out to the daring adventurer such instructions as his former practice, and the remembrance of local circumstances, suddenly forced upon his mind :—" Ye're right—ye're right !—that gate,[1] that gate !—fasten the rope weel round Crummie's Horn, that's the muckle black stane, cast twa plies round it—that's it !—now, weize yoursell a wee easel-ward—a wee mair yet to that ither stane—we ca'd it the Cat's Lug —there used to be the root o' an aik-tree there—that will do !—canny now, lad—canny now—tak tent and tak time—Lord bless ye, tak time—Vera weel ! Now ye maun get to Bessy's Apron, that's the muckle braid flat blue stane—and then, I think, wi' your help and the tow thegither, I'll win at ye, and then we'll be able to get up the young leddy and Sir Arthur."

The adventurer, following the directions of old Edie, flung him down the end of the rope, which the latter secured around Miss Wardour, wrapping her previously in his own blue gown, to preserve her as much as possible from injury. Then, availing himself of the rope, which was made fast at the other end, he began to ascend the face of the crag—a most precarious and dizzy undertaking, which, however, after one or two perilous escapes, placed him safe on the broad flat stone beside our friend Lovel. Their joint strength was able to raise Isabella to the place of safety which they had attained. Lovel then descended in order to assist Sir Arthur, around whom he adjusted the rope ; and again mounting to their place of refuge, with the assistance of old Ochiltree, and such aid as Sir Arthur himself could afford, he raised himself beyond the reach of the billows.

Of the two novels of 1816, *The Black Dwarf* does not show Scott at his best, but *Old Mortality* is in many

[1] Way.

ways the most perfect of his works. It was much attacked at the time by admirers of the Covenanters as a mere travesty of their creed, but the modern historian must regard it as extraordinarily fair to both Covenanter and Cavalier. If the savagery and madness of the extremists is shown in the picture of Ephraim Macbriar, and their comic side in Mause Headrig, their greatness is portrayed in Bessie Maclure, and even in the savagery of Balfour of Burley. The character of Claverhouse is not wholly historical, but it is infinitely nearer the truth than the picture given by Macaulay. The book is full of moments of the tensest drama, such as the death of Sergeant Bothwell and Morton's escape from Burley by his leap over the river. Here is an extract from the first :—

Bothwell had his own disadvantages to struggle with. His detour to the right had not escaped the penetrating observation of Burley, who made a corresponding movement with the left wing of the mounted insurgents, so that when Bothwell, after riding a considerable way up the valley, found a place at which the bog could be passed, though with some difficulty, he perceived he was still in front of a superior enemy. His daring character was in no degree checked by this unexpected opposition.

" Follow me, my lads ! " he called to his men ; " never let it be said that we turned our backs before these canting roundheads ! "

With that, as if inspired by the spirit of his ancestors, he shouted, " Bothwell ! Bothwell ! " and throwing himself into the morass, he struggled through it at the head of his party, and attacked that of Burley with such fury, that he drove them back

above a pistol-shot, killing three men with his own hand. Burley, perceiving the consequences of a defeat on this point, and that his men, though more numerous, were unequal to the regulars in using their arms and managing their horses, threw himself across Bothwell's way, and attacked him hand to hand. Each of the combatants was considered as the champion of his respective party, and a result ensued more usual in romance than in real story. Their followers, on either side, instantly paused, and looked on as if the fate of the day were to be decided by the event of the combat between these two redoubted swordsmen. The combatants themselves seemed of the same opinion ; for, after two or three eager cuts and pushes had been exchanged, they paused, as if by joint consent, to recover the breath which preceding exertions had exhausted, and to prepare for a duel in which each seemed conscious he had met his match.

" You are the murdering villain, Burley," said Bothwell, gripping his sword firmly, and setting his teeth close—" you escaped me once, but " (he swore an oath too tremendous to be written down)—" thy head is worth its weight of silver, and it shall go home at my saddle-bow or my saddle shall go home empty for me."

" Yes," replied Burley, with stern and gloomy deliberation. " I am that John Balfour, who promised to lay thy head where thou shouldst never lift it again ; and God do so unto me, and more also, if I do not redeem my word ! "

" Then a bed of heather, or a thousand merks ! " said Bothwell, striking at Burley with his full force.

" The sword of the Lord and of Gideon ! " answered Balfour, as he parried and returned the blow.

There have seldom met two combatants more equally matched in strength of body, skill in the management of their weapons and horses, determined

courage, and unrelenting hostility. After exchanging many desperate blows, each receiving and inflicting several wounds, though of no great consequence, they grappled together as if with the desperate impatience of mortal hate, and Bothwell, seizing his enemy by the shoulder-belt, while the grasp of Balfour was upon his own collar, they came headlong to the ground. The companions of Burley hastened to his assistance, but were repelled by the dragoons, and the battle became again general. But nothing could withdraw the attention of the combatants from each other, or induce them to unclose the deadly clasp in which they rolled together on the ground, tearing, struggling, and foaming, with the inveteracy of thoroughbred bull-dogs.

Several horses passed over them in the mêlée without their quitting hold of each other, until the sword-arm of Bothwell was broken by the kick of a charger. He then relinquished his grasp with a deep and suppressed groan, and both combatants started to their feet. Bothwell's right hand dropped helpless by his side, but his left groped to the place where his dagger hung ; it had escaped from the sheath in the struggle, —and, with a look of mingled rage and despair, he stood totally defenceless, as Balfour, with a laugh of savage joy, flourished his sword aloft, and then passed it through his adversary's body. Bothwell received the thrust without falling—it had only grazed on his ribs. He attempted no further defence, but, looking at Burley with a grin of deadly hatred, exclaimed—" Base peasant churl, thou hast spilt the blood of a line of kings ! "

" Die, wretch !—die ! " said Balfour, redoubling the thrust with better aim ; and, setting his foot on Bothwell's body as he fell, he a third time transfixed him with his sword.—" Die, bloodthirsty dog ! die as thou hast lived !—die, like the beasts that perish—hoping nothing—believing nothing——"

" And fearing nothing ! " said Bothwell, collecting the last effort of respiration to utter these desperate words, and expiring as soon as they were spoken.

Claverhouse's panegyric on a soldier's life is one of Scott's best-known passages :—

" But in truth, Mr. Morton, why should we care so much for death, light upon us or around us whenever it may ? Men die daily—not a bell tolls the hour but it is the death-note of some one or other ; and why hesitate to shorten the span of others, or take over-anxious care to prolong our own ? It is all a lottery —when the hour of midnight came, you were to die—it has struck, you are alive and safe, and the lot has fallen on those fellows who were to murder you. It is not the expiring pang that is worth thinking of in an event that must happen one day, and may befall us on any given moment—it is the memory which the soldier leaves behind him, like the long train of light that follows the sunken sun—that is all which is worth caring for, which distinguishes the death of the brave or the ignoble. When I think of death, Mr. Morton, as a thing worth thinking of, it is in the hope of pressing one day some well-fought and hard-won field of battle, and dying with the shout of victory in my ear—*that* would be worth dying for, and more, it would be worth having lived for ! "

As an example of Scott's power of depicting the humours of rustic society with tragedy in the background, I take a scene in Niel Blane's tavern, when Balfour of Burley, the murderer of Archbishop Sharp, meets the troopers who are on his trail :—

The cavalcade of horsemen on their road to the little borough-town were preceded by Niel Blane, the

town-piper, mounted on his white galloway, armed with his dirk and broadsword, and bearing a chanter streaming with as many ribbons as would deck out six country belles for a fair or preaching. Niel, a clean, tight, well-timbered, long-winded fellow, had gained the official situation of town-piper of —— by his merit, with all the emoluments thereof; namely, the Piper's Croft, as it is still called, a field of about an acre in extent, five merks, and a new livery-coat of the town's colours, yearly; some hopes of a dollar upon the day of the election of magistrates, providing the provost were able and willing to afford such a gratuity; and the privilege of paying, at all the respectable houses in the neighbourhood, an annual visit at spring-time, to rejoice their hearts with his music, to comfort his own with their ale and brandy, and to beg from each a modicum of seed-corn.

In addition to these inestimable advantages, Niel's personal, or professional, accomplishments won the heart of a jolly widow, who then kept the principal change-house in the borough. Her former husband having been a strict Presbyterian, of such note that he usually went among his sect by the name of Gaius the publican, many of the more rigid were scandalized by the profession of the successor whom his relict had chosen for a second helpmate. As the *browst* (or brewing) of the Howff retained, nevertheless, its unrivalled reputation, most of the old customers continued to give it a preference. The character of the new landlord, indeed, was of that acccommodating kind, which enabled him, by close attention to the helm, to keep his little vessel pretty steady amid the contending tides of faction. He was a good-humoured, shrewd, selfish sort of fellow, indifferent alike to the disputes about church and state, and only anxious to secure the good-will of customers of every description. But his character, as well as the state of the country, will be best understood by giving the reader an account

of the instructions which he issued to his daughter, a girl about eighteen, whom he was initiating in those cares which had been faithfully discharged by his wife, until about six months before our story commences, when the honest woman had been carried to the kirk-yard.

"Jenny," said Niel Blane, as the girl assisted to disencumber him of his bagpipes, "this is the first day that ye are to take the place of your worthy mother in attending to the public; a douce[1] woman she was, civil to the customers, and had a good name wi' Whig and Tory, baith up the street and down the street. It will be hard for you to fill her place, especially on sic a thrang[2] day as this; but Heaven's will maun be obeyed.—Jenny, whatever Milnwood ca's for, be sure he maun hae't, for he's the Captain o' the Popinjay, and auld customs maun be supported; if he canna pay the lawing[3] himsell, as I ken he's keepit unco short by the head, I'll find a way to shame it out o' his uncle.—The curate is playing at dice wi' Cornet Grahame. Be eident[4] and civil to them baith—clergy and captains can gie an unco deal o' fash[5] in thae times, where they take an ill-will.—The dragoons will be crying for ale, and they wunna want it, and maunna want it—they are unruly chields, but they pay ane some gate or other. I gat the humle-cow, that's the best in the byre, frae black Frank Inglis and Sergeant Bothwell, for ten pund Scots, and they drank out the price at ae downsitting."

"But, father," interrupted Jenny, "they say the twa reiving loons drave the cow frae the gudewife o' Bellsmoor, just because she gaed to hear a field-preaching ae Sabbath afternoon."

"Whisht! ye silly tawpie,"[6] said her father, "we have naething to do how they come by the bestial they sell—be that atween them and their consciences.—

[1] Quiet. [2] Busy. [3] Bill.
[4] Careful. [5] Trouble. [6] Slut.

Aweel—Take notice, Jenny, of that dour,[1] stour-looking[2] carle that sits by the cheek o' the ingle, and turns his back on a' men. He looks like ane o' the hill-folk, for I saw him start a wee when he saw the red-coats, and I jalouse[3] he wad hae liked to hae ridden by, but his horse (it's a gude gelding) was ower sair travailed; he behoved to stop whether he wad or no. Serve him cannily, Jenny, and wi' little din, and dinna bring the sodgers on him by speering[4] ony questions at him; but let na him hae a room to himsell, they wad say we were hiding him.—For yoursell, Jenny, ye'll be civil to a' the folk, and take nae heed o' ony nonsense and daffing[5] the young lads may say t'ye. Folk in the hostler line maun put up wi' muckle. Your mither, rest her saul, could pit up wi' as muckle as maist women—but aff hands is fair play; and if ony body be uncivil ye may gie me a cry—Aweel,—when the malt begins to get aboon the meal, they'll begin to speak about government in kirk and state, and then, Jenny, they are like to quarrel—let them be doing—anger's a drouthy[6] passion, and the mair they dispute, the mair ale they'll drink; but ye were best serve them wi' a pint o' the sma' browst, it will heat them less, and they'll never ken the difference."

"But, father," said Jenny, "if they come to lounder[7] ilk ither, as they did last time, suldna I cry on you?"

"At no hand, Jenny; the redder[8] gets aye the warst lick in the fray. If the sodgers draw their swords, ye'll cry on the corporal and the guard. If the country folk tak the tangs and poker, ye'll cry on the bailie and town-officers. But in nae event cry on me, for I am wearied wi' doudling the bag o' wind a' day, and I am gaun to eat my dinner quietly in the spence.—And, now I think on't, the Laird of Lickitup (that's him

[1] Hard. [2] Grim-looking. [3] Guess.
[4] Asking. [5] Fun. [6] Thirsty.
[7] Beat. [8] Peacemaker.

that was the laird) was speering for sma' drink and a saut herring—gie him a pu' by the sleeve, and round into his lug [1] I wad be blithe o' his company to dine wi' me ; he was a gude customer anes in a day, and wants naething but means to be a gude ane again—he likes drink as weel as e'er he did. And if ye ken ony puir body o' our acquaintance that's blate [2] for want o' siller, and has far to gang hame, ye needna stick to gie them a waught o' drink and a bannock—we'll ne'er miss't, and it looks creditable in a house like ours. And now, hinny, gang awa', and serve the folk, but first bring me my dinner, and twa chappins o' yill and the mutchkin stoup o' brandy."

Having thus devolved his whole cares on Jenny as prime minister, Niel Blane and the *ci-devant* laird, once his patron, but now glad to be his trencher-companion, sate down to enjoy themselves for the remainder of the evening, remote from the bustle of the public room.

All in Jenny's department was in full activity. The knights of the popinjay received and requited the hospitable entertainment of their captain, who, though he spared the cup himself, took care it should go round with due celerity among the rest, who might not have otherwise deemed themselves handsomely treated. Their numbers melted away by degrees, and were at length diminished to four or five, who began to talk of breaking up their party. At another table, at some distance, sat two of the dragoons, whom Niel Blane had mentioned, a sergeant and a private in the celebrated John Grahame of Claverhouse's regiment of Life-Guards. Even the non-commissioned officers and privates in these corps were not considered as ordinary mercenaries, but rather approached to the rank of the French mousquetaires, being regarded in the light of cadets, who performed the duties of rank-

[1] Ear. [2] Shy.

and-file with the prospect of obtaining commissions in case of distinguishing themselves.

Many young men of good families were to be found in the ranks, a circumstance which added to the pride and self-consequence of these troops. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the person of the non-commissioned officer in question. His real name was Francis Stewart, but he was universally known by the appellation of Bothwell, being lineally descended from the last earl of that name; not the infamous lover of the unfortunate Queen Mary, but Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, whose turbulence and repeated conspiracies embarrassed the early part of James Sixth's reign, and who at length died in exile in great poverty. The son of this Earl had sued to Charles I. for the restitution of part of his father's forfeited estates, but the grasp of the nobles to whom they had been allotted was too tenacious to be unclenched. The breaking out of the civil wars utterly ruined him, by intercepting a small pension which Charles I. had allowed him, and he died in the utmost indigence. His son, after having served as a soldier abroad and in Britain, and passed through several vicissitudes of fortune, was fain to content himself with the situation of a non-commissioned officer in the Life-Guards, although lineally descended from the royal family, the father of the forfeited Earl of Bothwell having been a natural son of James V. Great personal strength, and dexterity in the use of his arms, as well as the remarkable circumstances of his descent, had recommended this man to the attention of his officers. But he partook in a great degree of the licentiousness and oppressive disposition, which the habit of acting as agents for government in levying fines, exacting free quarters, and otherwise oppressing the Presbyterian recusants, had rendered too general among these soldiers. They were so much accustomed to such missions, that they conceived themselves at liberty to commit all manner

of license with impunity, as if totally exempted from all law and authority, excepting the command of their officers. On such occasions Bothwell was usually the most forward.

It is probable that Bothwell and his companions would not so long have remained quiet, but for respect to the presence of their Cornet, who commanded the small party quartered in the borough, and who was engaged in a game at dice with the curate of the place. But both of these being suddenly called from their amusement to speak with the chief magistrate upon some urgent business, Bothwell was not long of evincing his contempt for the rest of the company.

"Is it not a strange thing, Halliday," he said to his comrade, "to see a set of bumpkins sit carousing here this whole evening, without having drank the king's health?"

"They have drank the king's health," said Halliday. "I heard that green kail-worm[1] of a lad name his majesty's health."

"Did he?" said Bothwell. "Then, Tom, we'll have them drink the Archbishop of St. Andrews' health, and do it on their knees too."

"So we will, by G—," said Halliday; "and he that refuses it, we'll have him to the guard-house, and teach him to ride the colt foaled of an acorn, with a brace of carabines at each foot to keep him steady."

"Right, Tom," continued Bothwell; "and, to do all things in order, I'll begin with that sulky blue-bonnet in the ingle-nook."

He rose accordingly, and taking his sheathed broadsword under his arm to support the insolence which he meditated, placed himself in front of the stranger noticed by Niel Blane, in his admonitions to his daughter, as being, in all probability, one of the hill-folk, or refractory Presbyterians.

[1] Cabbage-worm.

" I make so bold as to request of your precision, beloved," said the trooper, in a tone of affected solemnity, and assuming the snuffle of a country preacher, " that you will arise from your seat, beloved, and, having bent your hams until your knees do rest upon the floor, beloved, that you will turn over this measure (called by the profane a gill) of the comfortable creature, which the carnal denominate brandy, to the health and glorification of his Grace the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the worthy primate of all Scotland."

All waited for the stranger's answer.—His features, austere even to ferocity, with a cast of eye, which, without being actually oblique, approached nearly to a squint, and which gave a very sinister expression to his countenance, joined to a frame, square, strong, and muscular, though something under the middle size, seemed to announce a man unlikely to understand rude jesting, or to receive insults with impunity.

" And what is the consequence," said he, " if I should not be disposed to comply with your uncivil request ? "

" The consequence thereof, beloved," said Bothwell, in the same tone of raillery, " will be, firstly, that I will tweak thy proboscis or nose. Secondly, beloved, that I will administer my fist to thy distorted visual optics ; and will conclude, beloved, with a practical application of the flat of my sword to the shoulders of the recusant."

" Is it even so ? " said the stranger ; " then give me the cup ; " and, taking it in his hand, he said, with a peculiar expression of voice and manner, " The Archbishop of St. Andrews, and the place he now worthily holds ;—may each prelate in Scotland soon be as the Right Reverend James Sharpe ! "

" He has taken the test," said Halliday exultingly.

" But with a qualification," said Bothwell ; " I don't understand what the devil the crop-eared whig means."

" Come, gentlemen," said Morton, who became impatient of their insolence, " we are here met as good subjects, and on a merry occasion ; and we have a right to expect we shall not be troubled with this sort of discussion."

Bothwell was about to make a surly answer, but Halliday reminded him in a whisper, that there were strict injunctions that the soldiers should give no offence to the men who were sent out to the musters agreeably to the council's orders. So, after honouring Morton with a broad and fierce stare, he said, " Well, Mr. Popinjay, I shall not disturb your reign ; I reckon it will be out by twelve at night.—Is it not an odd thing, Halliday," he continued, addressing his companion, " that they should make such a fuss about cracking off their birding-pieces at a mark which any woman or boy could hit at a day's practice ? If Captain Popinjay now, or any of his troop, would try a bout, either with the broadsword, backsword, single rapier, or rapier and dagger, for a gold noble, the first drawn blood, there would be some soul in it,—or, zounds, would the bumpkins but wrestle, or pitch the bar, or putt the stone, or throw the axle-tree, if " (touching the end of Morton's sword scornfully with his toe) " they carry things about them that they are afraid to draw."

Morton's patience and prudence now gave way entirely, and he was about to make a very angry answer to Bothwell's insolent observations, when the stranger stepped forward.

" This is my quarrel," he said, " and in the name of the good cause, I will see it out myself.—Hark thee, friend " (to Bothwell), " wilt thou wrestle a fall with me ? "

" With my whole spirit, beloved," answered Bothwell ; " yea, I will strive with thee, to the downfall of one or both."

" Then, as my trust is in Him that can help,"

retorted his antagonist, " I will forthwith make thee an example to all such railing Rabshakehs."

With that he dropped his coarse grey horseman's coat from his shoulders, and, extending his strong brawny arms with a look of determined resolution, he offered himself to the contest. The soldier was nothing abashed by the muscular frame, broad chest, square shoulders, and hardy look of his antagonist, but, whistling with great composure, unbuckled his belt, and laid aside his military coat. The company stood round them, anxious for the event.

In the first struggle the trooper seemed to have some advantage, and also in the second, though neither could be considered as decisive. But it was plain he had put his whole strength too suddenly forth, against an antagonist possessed of great endurance, skill, vigour, and length of wind. In the third close, the countryman lifted his opponent fairly from the floor, and hurled him to the ground with such violence, that he lay for an instant stunned and motionless. His comrade Halliday immediately drew his sword ; " You have killed my sergeant," he exclaimed to the victorious wrestler, " and by all that is sacred you shall answer it ! "

" Stand back ! " cried Morton and his companions, " it was all fair play ; your comrade sought a fall, and he has got it."

" That is true enough," said Bothwell, as he slowly rose ; " put up your bilbo, Tom. I did not think there was a crop-ear of them all could have laid the best cap and feather in the King's Life-Guards on the floor of a rascally change-house.—Hark ye, friend, give me your hand." The stranger held out his hand. " I promise you," said Bothwell, squeezing his hand very hard, " that the time will come when we shall meet again, and try this game over in a more earnest manner."

" And I'll promise you," said the stranger, returning

the grasp with equal firmness, " that when we next meet, I will lay your head as low as it lay even now, when you shall lack the power to lift it up again."

" Well, beloved," answered Bothwell, " if thou be'st a whig, thou art a stout and a brave one, and so good even to thee.—Hadst best take thy nag before the Cornet makes the round ; for, I promise thee, he has stay'd less suspicious-looking persons."

The stranger seemed to think that the hint was not to be neglected ; he flung down his reckoning, and going into the stable, saddled and brought out a powerful black horse, now recruited by rest and forage, and turning to Morton, observed, " I ride towards Milnwood, which I hear is your home ; will you give me the advantage and protection of your company ? "

" Certainly," said Morton ; although there was something of gloomy and relentless severity in the man's manner from which his mind recoiled. His companions, after a courteous good-night, broke up and went off in different directions, some keeping them company for about a mile, until they dropped off one by one, and the travellers were left alone.

The company had not long left the Howff, as Blane's public-house was called, when the trumpets and kettle-drums sounded. The troopers got under arms in the market-place at this unexpected summons, while, with faces of anxiety and earnestness, Cornet Grahame, a kinsman of Claverhouse, and the provost of the borough, followed by half-a-dozen soldiers, and town-officers with halberts, entered the apartment of Niel Blane.

" Guard the doors ! " were the first words which the Cornet spoke ; " let no man leave the house.—So, Bothwell, how comes this ? Did you not hear them sound boot and saddle ? "

" He was just going to quarters, sir," said his comrade ; " he has had a bad fall."

" In a fray, I suppose ? " said Grahame. " If you neglect duty in this way, your royal blood will hardly protect you."

" How have I neglected duty ? " said Bothwell, sulkily.

" You should have been at quarters, Sergeant Bothwell," replied the officer ; " you have lost a golden opportunity. Here are news come that the Archbishop of St. Andrews has been strangely and foully assassinated by a body of the rebel whigs, who pursued and stopped his carriage on Magus-Muir, near the town of St. Andrews, dragged him out, and dispatched him with their swords and daggers."

All stood aghast at the intelligence.

" Here are their descriptions," continued the Cornet, pulling out a proclamation, " the reward of a thousand merks is on each of their heads."

" The test, the test, and the qualification ! " said Bothwell to Halliday ; " I know the meaning now—Zounds, that we should not have stopt him ! Go saddle our horses, Halliday.—Was there one of the men, Cornet, very stout and square-made, double-chested, thin in the flanks, hawk-nosed ? "

" Stay, stay," said Cornet Grahame, " let me look at the paper.—Hackston of Rathillet, tall, thin, black-haired."

" That is not my man," said Bothwell.

" John Balfour, called Burley, aquiline nose, red-haired, five feet eight inches in height——"

" It is he—it is the very man ! " said Bothwell,—" skellies [1] fearfully with one eye ? "

" Right," continued Grahame, " rode a strong black horse, taken from the primate at the time of the murder."

" The very man," exclaimed Bothwell ; " and the very horse ! he was in this room not a quarter of an hour since."

[1] Squints.

Scott shows the greatness of his art in the way in which he blends the tragic and the comic, and portrays religious ecstasy and madness always against the prosaic background of normal life. Mause Headrig, caught up in religious fervour, begs her son not to "sully the marriage garment," and her son Cuddie replies, "Awa, awa, mither, never fear me—ye're bleezing awa about marriage, and the job is how we're to win by hanging." The same thing may be paralleled from the other novels. Alick Polwarth, after the fine tragic scene of Fergus MacIvor's death, brings us to earth with information about which gate his head is to be fixed on. And old Haagen, in *The Pirate*, dashes Minna's sentiment about Montrose by expounding, with unanswerable logic, the superior wisdom of running away. It is the breaking in on romance of a voice from the common world; it does not weaken the heroic, but it brings it home.

The novels, even the greatest, have their limitations. Scott, as he admitted when he wrote his admiring reviews of Miss Austen, had no great talent for the delicacies of social intercourse, and he was apt to treat his gentlewomen, with a few notable exceptions, rather like a toast to be drunk after King and Country. In certain kinds of tragedy he had no interest, and it is difficult to conceive of him succeeding in portraying the more subtle and introspective types of mind. He could depict a Hotspur, but not a Hamlet. Again, his books were written at great speed, and one need not look in them for any of the rarer delicacies of style. Such adornments in his type of work would have been as incongruous as point-lace inset in a buff coat. In his *Journal* he has a revealing confession. Any

merits he possesses, he says, come "from a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers and sailors and young people of bold and active disposition." He adds: "I have been no sigher in shades." But, certain rare types of character excepted, he had for his range the whole of human nature, and no man has ever taken larger tracts of human life and portrayed them with more insight and vigour. He can be dull, as Homer can be dull, but when the great dramatic moment comes he rises to it with the ease and certainty of genius. He is often careless in his writing, and is too apt to fall into the jargon of polite English. For example, he speaks of "the superb monarch of the feathered tribes" when he means an eagle; he allows Helen Macgregor, in *Rob Roy*, and Norna, in *The Pirate*, to talk like governesses from Miss Pinkerton's Academy; and—unpardonable crime—makes the ever-delightful Di Vernon thus address Rashleigh Osbaldistone: "Dismiss from your company the false archimage Dissimulation, and it will better ensure your free access to our classic consultations." But, as against these blemishes, we may set his extraordinary skill in dialogue when he is dealing with anybody except his heroes and heroines. His peasants talk with the racy naturalness of life, and though his writing is often cumbrous, when the emotion becomes tense it clarifies to an almost perfect beauty. An instance is the farewell of Meg Merrilies already quoted; another is the whole of "Wandering Willie's Tale" in *Redgauntlet*. The latter piece is one of the few which he is known to have carefully revised, and there is not a word in it which the most exacting critic could condemn.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WAVERLEY NOVELS—"ROB ROY," "THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR," "THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN"

THE novels made Scott a rich man, and the most famous figure in literature of his day. When he went to London he was everywhere fêted; the Prince Regent welcomed him to the society of Carlton House; when he crossed the Channel he was honoured by the friendship of the leading soldiers and statesmen both in France and Germany. His simplicity of nature prevented success from spoiling him, and he conducted himself everywhere with easy good breeding. Characteristically he confessed that he had never felt awed or abashed except in the presence of one man—the Duke of Wellington. He formed a real friendship with Lord Byron, who had now supplanted him in the popular estimation as a poet.

> Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the *Iliad*, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—"The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February 1811." The other face bears the lines of Juvenal, "Expende —quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula." To these I have added a third inscription, in these words —"The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott."

With his new-found wealth, which had come to him like fairy gold, he bought land in the neighbourhood of Abbotsford from whoever would sell, and in place of the humble farm of Clarty Hole he erected a Gothic palace, spending large sums on rare furniture and antiques. There he lived like some feudal lord of the Middle Ages, keeping open house, and welcoming not only his Edinburgh and London friends, but distinguished visitors from abroad. Washington Irving, the American writer, has given us a delightful account of his visit to Abbotsford in 1817.

> As we sallied forth (he writes), every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal, and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft, silken hair, long pendant ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound who came from the kitchen wagging his tail; and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then giving

a glance at us, as much as to say, "You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense," would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. "I make no doubt," said he, "when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say—"Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters; what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?" Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. "If ever he whipped him," he said, "the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping knife, as if chopping up his victuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him." His domestic animals were his friends. Everything about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance.

Our ramble took us on the hills commanding an extensive prospect. "Now," said Scott, "I have brought you, like the Pilgrim in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, to the top of the Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts." . . . . I gazed about me for a time with mute surprise. I may almost say with disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or thicket on its banks; and yet such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had beheld in England. I could not help giving utterance to my thoughts. Scott hummed for a moment to himself,

and looked grave ; he had no idea of having his muse complimented at the expense of his native hills. "It may be pertinacity," said he at length, "but to my eye, these grey hills, and all this wild border country, have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land ; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills ; and if I did not see the heather, at least once a year, I think I should die!" The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech.

This was perhaps the fullest and happiest period of Scott's life. His son-in-law, Lockhart, has reproduced for us the manner of his conversation : "The strongest, purest, and least observed of all lights, is daylight ; and his talk was commonplace, just as sunshine is, which gilds the most indifferent objects, and adds brilliancy to the brightest." Shallow people held Scott's table-talk to be prosaic because he had no affectations. Lord Cockburn, when some foolish person chanced to say this in his hearing, answered, "I have the misfortune to think differently from you —in my humble opinion, Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his *genius*."

At this moment (says Lockhart) his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could show of eminence. Station, power, wealth, beauty, and genius, strove with each other in every demonstration of respect and worship, and—a few political fanatics and envious poetasters apart—wherever he appeared in town or

country, whoever had Scotch blood in him, "gentle or simple," felt it move more rapidly through his veins when he was in the presence of Scott. To descend to what many looked on as higher things, he considered himself, and was considered by all about him, as rapidly consolidating a large fortune :—the annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than £10,000 ; his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favour of his Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamt of as the possible consequences of a mere literary celebrity. It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career ; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connections, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great and the wonder of the world.

In 1817 Scott had his first attack of serious illness, a form of cramp in the stomach, which gave him violent pain. He went to bed, as he says, "roaring like a bull calf," and so great was the agony that heated salt, though it burnt his shirt to rags, was hardly felt when clapped to his skin. Though he had eight years of prosperity still before him, he had no more years of unbroken health. *Rob Roy* was finished under conditions of extreme suffering ; *The Bride of Lammermoor* was dictated by him to Will Laidlaw, and the pain was so great that he remembered nothing of what he had written :—

He had now begun in earnest his *Bride of Lammermoor*, and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and

John Ballantyne ;—of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen ; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and, though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk ; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—" Gude keep us a' !—the like o' that !—eh, sirs ! "—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, " Nay, Willie," he answered, " only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves ; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me, that after the first day, he always took care to have a dozen pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath.

*Rob Roy*, published in 1817, is by common consent one of the most delightful of the novels. The plot, as usual, is tangled and unconvincing, but plot matters little when Diana Vernon, the best of his gentlewomen, Rob Roy himself, Andrew Fairservice, and the immortal Bailie Nicol Jarvie are among the figures. If the speeches of Helen Macgregor are conceived in too melodramatic a vein, humorous realism can go no further than the conversations of the Bailie or the talk at the Clachan of Aberfoyle. Here is the famous scene :—

About half a mile's riding, after we crossed the bridge, placed us at the door of the public-house where we were to pass the evening. It was a hovel rather worse than better than that in which we had dined; but its little windows were lighted up, voices were heard from within, and all intimated a prospect of food and shelter, to which we were by no means indifferent. Andrew was the first to observe that there was a peeled willow-wand placed across the half-open door of the little inn. He hung back, and advised us not to enter. "For," said Andrew, "some of their chiefs and grit men are birling at the usquebaugh in by there, and dinna want to be disturbed; and the least we'll get, if we gang ram-stam in on them, will be a broken head, to learn us better havings,[1] if we dinna come by the length of a cauld dirk in our wame,[2] whilk is just as likely."

I looked at the Bailie, who acknowledged in a whisper, "that the gowk[3] had some reason for singing, ance in the year."

Meantime a staring half-clad wench or two came out of the inn and the neighbouring cottages, on hearing the sound of our horses' feet. No one bade us welcome, nor did any one offer to take our horses, from which we had alighted; and to our various inquiries, the hopeless response of "Ha niel Sassenach," was the only answer we could extract. The Bailie, however, found (in his experience) a way to make them speak English. "If I gie ye a bawbee,"[4] said he to an urchin of about ten years old, with a fragment of a tattered plaid about him, "will you understand Sassenach?"

"Ay, ay, that will I," replied the brat, in very decent English.

"Then gang and tell your mammy, my man,

[1] Behaviour.
[2] Stomach.
[3] Fool.
[4] Halfpenny.

there's twa Sassenach gentlemen come to speak wi' her."

The landlady presently appeared, with a lighted piece of split fir blazing in her hand. The turpentine in this species of torch (which is generally dug from out the turf-bogs) makes it blaze and sparkle readily, so that it is often used in the Highlands in lieu of candles. On this occasion such a torch illuminated the wild and anxious features of a female, pale, thin, and rather above the usual size, whose soiled and ragged dress, though aided by a plaid or tartan screen, barely served the purposes of decency, and certainly not those of comfort. Her black hair, which escaped in uncombed elf-locks from under her coif, as well as the strange and embarrassed look with which she regarded us, gave me the idea of a witch disturbed in the midst of her unlawful rites. She plainly refused to admit us into the house. We remonstrated anxiously, and pleaded the length of our journey, the state of our horses, and the certainty that there was not another place where we could be received nearer than Callander, which the Bailie stated to be seven Scots miles distant. How many these may exactly amount to in English measurement, I have never been able to ascertain, but I think the double *ratio* may be pretty safely taken as a medium computation. The obdurate hostess treated our expostulation with contempt. "Better gang farther than fare waur,"[1] she said, speaking the Scottish Lowland dialect, and being indeed a native of the Lennox district,—"Her house was ta'en up wi' them wadna like to be intruded on wi' strangers.—She didna ken wha mair might be there—redcoats, it might be, frae the garrison." (These last words she spoke under her breath, and with very strong emphasis.) "The night," she said, "was fair abune head—a night amang the heather wad caller[2]

[1] Worse. [2] Cool.

our bloods—we might sleep in our claes[1] as mony a gude blade does in the scabbard—there wasna muckle flowmoss in the shaw, if we took up our quarters right, and we might pit up our horses to the hill, naebody wad say naething against it."

"But, my good woman," said I, while the Bailie groaned and remained undecided, "it is six hours since we dined, and we have not taken a morsel since. I am positively dying with hunger, and I have no taste for taking up my abode supperless among these mountains of yours. I positively must enter; and make the best apology you can to your guests for adding a stranger or two to their number.—Andrew, you will see the horses put up."

The Hecate looked at me with surprise, and then ejaculated, "A wilfu' man will hae his way—them that will to Cupar maun[2] to Cupar!—To see thae English belly-gods—he has had ae fu' meal the day already, and he'll venture life and liberty rather than he'll want a het supper! Set roasted beef and pudding on the opposite side o' the pit o' Tophet, and an Englishman will mak a spang[3] at it—But I wash my hands o't—Follow me, sir," (to Andrew,) "and I'se show ye where to pit the beasts."

I own I was somewhat dismayed at my landlady's expressions, which seemed to be ominous of some approaching danger. I did not, however, choose to shrink back after having declared my resolution, and accordingly I boldly entered the house; and after narrowly escaping breaking my shins over a turf stack and a salting tub, which stood on either side of the narrow exterior passage, I opened a crazy half-decayed door, constructed not of plank, but of wicker, and, followed by the Bailie, entered into the principal apartment of this Scottish caravansary.

The interior presented a view which seemed singular

[1] Clothes. [2] Must. [3] Clutch.

enough to southern eyes. The fire, fed with blazing turf and branches of dried wood, blazed merrily in the centre ; but the smoke, having no means to escape but through a hole in the roof, eddied round the rafters of the cottage, and hung in sable folds at the height of about five feet from the floor. The space beneath was kept pretty clear, by innumerable currents of air which rushed towards the fire from the broken panel of basket-work which served as a door, from two square holes, designed as ostensible windows, through one of which was thrust a plaid, and through the other a tattered greatcoat ; and, moreover, through various less distinguishable apertures in the walls of the tenement, which, being built of round stones and turf, cemented by mud, let in the atmosphere at innumerable crevices.

At an old oaken table, adjoining to the fire, sat three men, guests apparently, whom it was impossible to regard with indifference. Two were in the Highland dress ; the one, a little dark-complexioned man, with a lively, quick, and irritable expression of features, wore the trews, or close pantaloons, wove out of a sort of chequered stocking stuff. The Bailie whispered me, that "he behoved[1] to be a man of some consequence, for that naebody but their Duinhéwassels wore the trews ; they were ill to weave exactly to their Highland pleasure."

The other mountaineer was a very tall, strong man, with a quantity of reddish hair, freckled face, high cheek-bones, and long chin—a sort of caricature of the national features of Scotland. The tartan which he wore differed from that of his companion, as it had much more scarlet in it, whereas the shades of black and dark-green predominated in the chequers of the other. The third, who sate at the same table, was in the Lowland dress,—a bold, stout-looking man, with

[1] Was bound.

a cast of military daring in his eye and manner, his riding-dress showily and profusely laced, and his cocked hat of formidable dimensions. His hanger and a pair of pistols lay on the table before him. Each of the Highlanders had their naked dirks stuck upright in the board beside him—an emblem, I was afterwards informed, but surely a strange one, that their compotation was not to be interrupted by any brawl. A mighty pewter measure, containing about an English quart of usquebaugh, a liquor nearly as strong as brandy, which the Highlanders distil from malt, and drink undiluted in excessive quantities, was placed before these worthies. A broken glass, with a wooden foot, served as a drinking cup to the whole party, and circulated with a rapidity which, considering the potency of the liquor, seemed absolutely marvellous. These men spoke loud and eagerly together, sometimes in Gaelic, at other times in English. Another Highlander, wrapt in his plaid, reclined on the floor, his head resting on a stone, from which it was only separated by a wisp of straw, and slept, or seemed to sleep, without attending to what was going on around him. He also was probably a stranger, for he lay in full dress, and accoutred with the sword and target, the usual arms of his countrymen when on a journey. Cribs there were of different dimensions beside the walls, formed, some of fractured boards, some of shattered wicker-work or plaited boughs, in which slumbered the family of the house, men, women, and children, their places of repose only concealed by the dusky wreaths of vapour which arose above, below, and around them.

Our entrance was made so quietly, and the carousers I have described were so eagerly engaged in their discussions, that we escaped their notice for a minute or two. But I observed the Highlander who lay beside the fire raise himself on his elbow as we entered, and, drawing his plaid over the lower part of his face, fix

his look on us for a few seconds, after which he resumed his recumbent posture, and seemed again to betake himself to the repose which our entrance had interrupted.

We advanced to the fire, which was an agreeable spectacle after our late ride, during the chillness of an autumn evening among the mountains, and first attracted the attention of the guests who had preceded us, by calling for the landlady. She approached, looking doubtfully and timidly, now at us, now at the other party, and returned a hesitating and doubtful answer to our request to have something to eat.

"She didna ken," she said, "she wasna sure there was onything in the house," and then modified her refusal with the qualification,—"that is, onything fit for the like of us."

I assured her we were indifferent to the quality of our supper; and looking round for the means of accommodation, which were not easily to be found, I arranged an old hen-coop as a seat for Mr. Jarvie, and turned down a broken tub to serve for my own. Andrew Fairservice entered presently afterwards, and took a place in silence behind our backs. The natives, as I may call them, continued staring at us with an air as if confounded by our assurance, and we, at least I myself, disguised as well as we could, under an appearance of indifference, any secret anxiety we might feel concerning the mode in which we were to be received by those whose privacy we had disturbed.

At length the lesser Highlander, addressing himself to me, said, in very good English, and in a tone of great haughtiness, "Ye make yourself at home, sir, I see."

"I usually do so," I replied, "when I come into a house of public entertainment."

"And did she na see," said the taller man, "by the white wand at the door, that gentlemans had taken up the public-house on their ain business?"

"I do not pretend to understand the customs of this country; but I am yet to learn," I replied, "how three persons should be entitled to exclude all other travellers from the only place of shelter and refreshment for miles round."

"There's nae reason for't, gentlemen," said the Bailie; "we mean nae offence—but there's neither law nor reason for't—but as far as a stoup[1] o' gude brandy wad make up the quarrel, we, being peaceable folk, wad be willing——"

"Damn your brandy, sir!" said the Lowlander, adjusting his cocked hat fiercely upon his head; "we desire neither your brandy nor your company," and up he rose from his seat. His companions also arose, muttering to each other, drawing up their plaids, and snorting and snuffing the air after the manner of their countrymen when working themselves into a passion.

"I tauld[2] ye what wad come, gentlemen," said the landlady, "an ye wad hae been tauld—get awa' wi' ye out o' my house, and make nae disturbance here—there's nae gentleman be disturbed at Jeanie MacAlpine's an she can hinder. A wheen[3] idle English loons, gaun about the country under cloud o' night, and disturbing honest peaceable gentlemen that are drinking their drap drink at the fireside!"

At another time I should have thought of the old Latin adage,

"Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas——"

But I had not any time for classical quotation, for there was obviously a fray about to ensue, at which, feeling myself indignant at the inhospitable insolence with which I was treated, I was totally indifferent, unless on the Bailie's account, whose person and qualities were ill qualified for such an adventure. I

[1] Jug. [2] Told. [3] Lot of.

started up, however, on seeing the others rise, and dropped my cloak from my shoulders, that I might be ready to stand on the defensive.

"We are three to three," said the lesser Highlander, glancing his eyes at our party; "if ye be pretty men, draw!" and, unsheathing his broadsword, he advanced on me. I put myself in a posture of defence, and, aware of the superiority of my weapon, a rapier or small-sword, was little afraid of the issue of the contest. The Bailie behaved with unexpected mettle. As he saw the gigantic Highlander confront him with his weapon drawn, he tugged for a second or two at the hilt of his *shabble*, as he called it; but finding it loth to quit the sheath, to which it had long been secured by rust and disuse, he seized, as a substitute, on the red-hot coulter of a plough which had been employed in arranging the fire by way of a poker, and brandished it with such effect, that at the first pass he set the Highlander's plaid on fire, and compelled him to keep a respectful distance till he could get it extinguished. Andrew, on the contrary, who ought to have faced the Lowland champion, had, I grieve to say it, vanished at the very commencement of the fray. But his antagonist, crying, "Fair play! fair play!" seemed courteously disposed to take no share in the scuffle. Thus we commenced our rencontre on fair terms as to numbers. My own aim was, to possess myself, if possible, of my antagonist's weapon; but I was deterred from closing for fear of the dirk which he held in his left hand, and used in parrying the thrusts of my rapier. Meantime the Bailie, notwithstanding the success of his first onset, was sorely bested. The weight of his weapon, the corpulence of his person, the very effervescence of his own passions, were rapidly exhausting both his strength and his breath, and he was almost at the mercy of his antagonist, when up started the sleeping Highlander from the floor on which he reclined, with his naked

sword and target in his hand, and threw himself between the discomfited magistrate and his assailant, exclaiming, "Her nainsell[1] has eaten the town pread at the Cross o' Glasgow, and py her troth she'll fight for Bailie Sharvie at the Clachan of Aberfoil—tat will she e'en!" And seconding his words with deeds, this unexpected auxiliary made his sword whistle about the ears of his tall countryman, who, nothing abashed, returned his blows with interest. But being both accoutred with round targets made of wood, studded with brass, and covered with leather, with which they readily parried each other's strokes, their combat was attended with much more noise and clatter than serious risk of damage. It appeared, indeed, that there was more of bravado than of serious attempt to do us any injury; for the Lowland gentleman, who, as I mentioned, had stood aside for want of an antagonist when the brawl commenced, was now pleased to act the part of moderator and peace-maker.

"Haud[2] your hands—haud your hands—eneugh done—eneugh done!—the quarrel's no mortal. The strange gentlemen have shown themselves men of honour, and gien reasonable satisfaction. I'll stand on mine honour as kittle[3] as ony man, but I hate unnecessary bloodshed."

It was not, of course, my wish to protract the fray—my adversary seemed equally disposed to sheathe his sword—the Bailie, gasping for breath, might be considered as *hors de combat*, and our two sword-and-buckler men gave up their contest with as much indifference as they had entered into it.

"And now," said the worthy gentleman who acted as umpire, "let us drink and gree[4] like honest fellows—The house will haud[5] us a'. I propose that this good little gentleman, that seems sair forfoughen,[6] as I may say, in this tuilzie, shall send for a tass o' brandy, and

[1] Own self. [2] Hold. [3] Particular.
[4] Agree. [5] Hold. [6] Sore distressed.

I'll pay for another, by way of archilowe,[1] and then we'll birl[2] our bawbees a' round about, like brethren."

"And fa's to pay my new ponnie plaid," said the larger Highlander, "wi' a hole burnt in't ane might put a kail-pat[3] through? Saw ever onybody a decent gentleman fight wi' a firebrand before?"

"Let that be nae hindrance," said the Bailie, who had now recovered his breath, and was at once disposed to enjoy the triumph of having behaved with spirit, and avoid the necessity of again resorting to such hard and doubtful arbitrement;—"Gin I hae broken the head," he said, "I sall find the plaister. A new plaid sall ye hae, and o' the best—your ain clan-colours, man—an ye will tell me where it can be sent t'ye frae Glasco."

"I needna name my clan—I am of a king's clan, as is weel kend,"[4] said the Highlander; "but ye may tak a bit o' the plaid—figh, she smells like a singit[5] sheep's head!—and that'll learn ye the sett[6]—and a gentleman, that's a cousin o' my ain, that carries eggs doun frae Glencroe, will ca' for't about Martinmas, an ye will tell her where ye bide. But, honest gentleman, neist time ye fight, an ye hae ony respect for your adversary, let it be wi' your sword, man, since ye wear ane, and no wi' thae het culters and fireprands, like a wild Indian.

"Conscience!" replied the Bailie, "every man maun do as he dow[7]—my sword hasna seen the light since Bothwell Brigg, when my father, that's dead and gane, ware it; and I kenna weel if it was forthcoming then either, for the battle was o' the briefest—At ony rate, it's glewed to the scabbard now beyond my power to part them; and, finding that, I e'en grippit at the first thing I could make a fend[8] wi'. I trow my fighting days is done, though I like ill to take

[1] Archilowe, of unknown derivation, signifies a peace-offering.
[2] Circulate. [3] Broth-pot. [4] Known. [5] Singed.
[6] Pattern. [7] Can. [8] Defence.

the scorn for a' that.—But where's the honest lad that tuik my quarrel on himsell sae frankly?—I'se bestow a gill o' aquavitæ on him, an I suld never ca' for ânither."

The champion for whom he looked around was, however, no longer to be seen. He had escaped, unobserved by the Bailie, immediately when the brawl was ended, yet not before I had recognized, in his wild features and shaggy red hair, our acquaintance Dougal, the fugitive turnkey of the Glasgow jail. I communicated this observation in a whisper to the Bailie, who answered in the same tone, "Weel, weel, I see that him that ye ken o' said very right. There *is* some glimmering o' common sense about that creature Dougal; I maun see and think o' something will do him some gude."

Thus saying, he sat down, and fetching one or two deep aspirations, by way of recovering his breath, called to the landlady; "I think, Luckie, now that I find that there's nae hole in my wame, whilk I had muckle reason to doubt frae the doings o' your house, I wad be the better o' something to pit intill't."

The dame, who was all officiousness so soon as the storm had blown over, immediately undertook to broil something comfortable for our supper. Indeed, nothing surprised me more, in the course of the whole matter, than the extreme calmness with which she and her household seemed to regard the martial tumult that had taken place. The good woman was only heard to call to some of her assistants, "Steek[1] the door—steek the door!—Kill or be killed, let naebody pass out till they hae paid the lawin."[2] And as for the slumberers in those lairs by the wall, which served the family for beds, they only raised their shirtless bodies to look at the fray, ejaculated, "Oigh! oigh!" in the tone suitable to their respective sex and

[1] Shut. [2] Bill.

ages, and were, I believe, fast asleep again, ere our swords were well returned to their scabbards.

Our landlady, however, now made a great bustle to get some victuals ready, and, to my surprise, very soon began to prepare for us, in the frying-pan, a savoury mess of venison collops, which she dressed in a manner that might well satisfy hungry men, if not epicures. In the meantime the brandy was placed on the table, to which the Highlanders, however partial to their native strong waters, showed no objection, but much the contrary; and the Lowland gentleman, after the first cup had passed round, became desirous to know our profession, and the object of our journey.

"We are bits o' Glasgow bodies, if it please your honour," said the Bailie, with an affectation of great humility, "travelling to Stirling to get in some siller that is awing[1] us."

I was so silly as to feel a little disconcerted at the unassuming account which he chose to give of us; but I recollected my promise to be silent, and allow the Bailie to manage the matter his own way. And really, when I recollected, Will, that I had not only brought the honest man a long journey from home, which even in itself had been some inconvenience (if I were to judge from the obvious pain and reluctance with which he took his seat or arose from it), but had also put him within a hair's-breadth of the loss of his life, I could hardly refuse him such a compliment. The spokesman of the other party, snuffing up his breath through his nose, repeated the words with a sort of sneer;—"You Glasgow tradesfolks hae naething to do but to gang frae the tae[2] end o' the west o' Scotland to the ither, to plague honest folks that may chance to be a wee ahint[3] the hand, like me."

"If our debtors were a' sic honest gentlemen as I believe you to be, Garschattachin," replied the Bailie,

[1] Owing. [2] One. [3] Behind.

" conscience ! we might save ourselves a labour, for they wad come to seek us."

" Eh ! what ! how ! " exclaimed the person whom he had addressed, " as I shall live by bread (not forgetting beef and brandy), it's my auld friend Nicol Jarvie, the best man that ever counted doun merks on a band till a distressed gentleman. Were ye na coming up my way ?—were ye na coming up the Endrick to Garschattachin ? "

" Troth no, Maister Galbraith," replied the Bailie, " I had other eggs on the spit—and I thought ye wad be saying I cam to look about the annual rent that's due on the bit heritable band that's between us."

" Damn the annual rent ! " said the laird, with an appearance of great heartiness,—" Deil a word o' business will you or I speak, now that ye're sae near my country—To see how a trot-cosey and a joseph can disguise a man—that I suldna ken my auld feal [1] friend the deacon ! "

" The bailie, if ye please," resumed my companion ; " but I ken what gars [2] ye mistak—the band was granted to my father that's happy, and he was deacon ; but his name was Nicol as weel as mine. I dinna mind that there's been a payment of principal sum or annual rent on it in my day, and doubtless that has made the mistake."

" Weel, the devil take the mistake and all that occasioned it ! " replied Mr. Galbraith. " But I am glad ye are a bailie. Gentlemen, fill a brimmer—this is my excellent friend, Bailie Nicol Jarvie's health—I kend him and his father these twenty years. Are ye a' cleared kelty aff ? [3]—Fill anither. Here's to his being sune provost—I say provost—Lord Provost Nicol Jarvie !—and them that affirms there's a man walks the Hie Street o' Glasgow that's fitter for the

[1] True. [2] Makes. [3] Completely.

office, they will do weel not to let me, Duncan Galbraith of Garschattachin, hear them say sae—that's all." And therewith Duncan Galbraith martially cocked his hat, and placed it on one side of his head with an air of defiance.

The brandy was probably the best recommendation of these complimentary toasts to the two Highlanders, who drank them without appearing anxious to comprehend their purport. They commenced a conversation with Mr. Galbraith in Gaelic, which he talked with perfect fluency, being, as I afterwards learned, a near neighbour to the Highlands.

" I kend that Scant-o'-grace weel eneugh frae the very outset," said the Bailie, in a whisper to me ; " but when blude was warm, and swords were out at ony rate, wha kens what way he might hae thought o' paying his debts ? it will be lang or he does it in common form. But he's an honest lad, and has a warm heart too ; he disna come often to the Cross o' Glasgow, but mony a buck and blackcock he sends us doun frae the hills. And I can want my siller [1] weel eneugh. My father the deacon had a great regard for the family of Garschattachin."

The following year saw the publication of *The Heart of Midlothian* and *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The first is regarded by many as the greatest of the novels, and, save for the weak and careless ending, it is not easy to find a flaw in it. In the character of Davie Deans Scott atoned in the eyes of many for his *Old Mortality* by reproducing the Covenanter at his best, and Jeanie Deans herself is the finest of his female portraits. The theme of the book is her self-sacrificing sisterly love for her sister Effie, and the great moment is reached in her interview with Queen Caroline :—

[1] Money.

The Duke made a signal for Jeanie to advance from the spot where she had hitherto remained watching countenances, which were too long accustomed to suppress all apparent signs of emotion, to convey to her any interesting intelligence. Her Majesty could not help smiling at the awe-struck manner in which the quiet demure figure of the little Scotchwoman advanced towards her, and yet more at the first sound of her broad northern accent. But Jeanie had a voice low and sweetly toned, an admirable thing in woman, and eke besought " her Leddyship to have pity on a poor misguided young creature," in tones so affecting that, like the notes of some of her native songs, provincial vulgarity was lost in pathos.

" Stand up, young woman," said the Queen, but in a kind tone, " and tell me what sort of a barbarous people your countryfolk are, where child-murder is become so common as to require the restraint of laws like yours ? "

" If your Leddyship pleases," answered Jeanie, " there are mony places beside Scotland where mothers are unkind to their ain flesh and blood."

It must be observed that the disputes between George the Second and Frederick, Prince of Wales, were then at the highest, and that the good-natured part of the public laid the blame on the Queen. She coloured highly, and darted a glance of a most penetrating character first at Jeanie, and then at the Duke. Both sustained it unmoved ; Jeanie from total unconsciousness of the offence she had given, and the Duke from his habitual composure. But in his heart he thought, My unlucky *protégée* has, with this luckless answer, shot dead, by a kind of chance-medley, her only hope of success.

Lady Suffolk, good-humouredly and skilfully, interposed in this awkward crisis. " You should tell this lady," she said to Jeanie, " the particular causes which render this crime common in your country."

" Some thinks it's the Kirk-Session—that is—it's the—it's the cutty-stool, if your Leddyship pleases," said Jeanie, looking down and curtseying.

" The what ? " said Lady Suffolk, to whom the phrase was new, and who besides was rather deaf.

" That's the stool of repentance, madam, if it please your Leddyship," answered Jeanie, " for light life and conversation, and for breaking the seventh command." Here she raised her eyes to the Duke, saw his hand at his chin, and totally unconscious of what she had said out of joint, gave double effect to the innuendo by stopping short and looking embarrassed.

As for Lady Suffolk, she retired like a covering party, which, having interposed betwixt their retreating friends and the enemy, have suddenly drawn on themselves a fire unexpectedly severe.

The deuce take the lass, thought the Duke of Argyle to himself : there goes another shot—and she has hit with both barrels right and left !

Indeed the Duke had himself his share of the confusion, for, having acted as master of ceremonies to this innocent offender, he felt much in the circumstances of a country squire, who, having introduced his spaniel into a well-appointed drawing-room, is doomed to witness the disorder and damage which arises to china and to dress-gowns, in consequence of its untimely frolics. Jeanie's last chance-hit, however, obliterated the ill impression which had arisen from the first ; for her Majesty had not so lost the feelings of a wife in those of a Queen, but that she could enjoy a jest at the expense of " her good Suffolk." She turned towards the Duke of Argyle with a smile, which marked that she enjoyed the triumph, and observed, " The Scotch are a rigidly moral people." Then again applying herself to Jeanie, she asked, " how she travelled up from Scotland ? "

" Upon my foot mostly, madam," was the reply.

What, all that immense way upon foot?—How far can you walk in a day?"

"Five and twenty miles and a bittock."

"And a what?" said the Queen, looking towards the Duke of Argyle.

"And about five miles more," replied the Duke.

"I thought I was a good walker," said the Queen, "but this shames me sadly."

"May your Leddyship never hae sae weary a heart, that ye canna be sensible of the weariness of the limbs!" said Jeanie.

That came better off, thought the Duke; it's the first thing she has said to the purpose.

"And I didna just a'thegether walk the haill[1] way neither, for I had whiles[2] the cast of a cart; and I had the cast of a horse from Ferrybridge—and divers other easements," said Jeanie, cutting short her story, for she observed the Duke made the sign he had fixed upon.

"With all these accommodations," answered the Queen, "you must have had a very fatiguing journey, and, I fear, to little purpose; since, if the King were to pardon your sister, in all probability it would do her little good, for I suppose your people of Edinburgh would hang her out of spite."

She will sink herself now outright, thought the Duke.

But he was wrong. The shoals on which Jeanie had touched in this delicate conversation lay under ground, and were unknown to her; this rock was above water, and she avoided it.

"She was confident," she said, "that baith town and country wad rejoice to see his Majesty taking compassion on a poor unfriended creature."

"His Majesty has not found it so in a late instance," said the Queen; "but, I suppose, my Lord Duke

[1] Whole. [2] Sometimes.

would advise him to be guided by the votes of the rabble themselves, who should be hanged and who spared ? "

" No, madam," said the Duke ; " but I would advise his Majesty to be guided by his own feelings, and those of his royal consort ; and then, I am sure, punishment will only attach itself to guilt, and even then with cautious reluctance."

" Well, my lord," said her Majesty, " all these fine speeches do not convince me of the propriety of so soon showing any mark of favour to your—I suppose I must not say rebellious ?—but, at least, your very disaffected and intractable metropolis. Why, the whole nation is in a league to screen the savage and abominable murderers of that unhappy man ; otherwise, how is it possible but that, of so many perpetrators who are engaged in so public an action for such a length of time, one at least must have been recognized ? Even this wench, for aught I can tell, may be a depositary of the secret.—Hark you, young woman, had you any friends engaged in the Porteous mob ? "

" No, madam," answered Jeanie, happy that the question was so framed that she could, with a good conscience, answer it in the negative.

" But I suppose," continued the Queen, " if you were possessed of such a secret, you would hold it a matter of conscience to keep it to yourself ? "

" I would pray to be directed and guided what was the line of duty, madam," answered Jeanie.

" Yes, and take that which suited your own inclinations," replied her Majesty.

" If it like you, madam," said Jeanie, " I would hae gaen to the end of the earth to save the life of John Porteous, or any other unhappy man in his condition ; but I might lawfully doubt how far I am called upon to be the avenger of his blood, though it may become the civil magistrate to do so. He is dead and gane to

his place, and they that have slain him must answer for their ain act. But my sister—my puir sister Effie, still lives, though her days and hours are numbered !—She still lives, and a word of the King's mouth might restore her to a broken-hearted auld man, that never, in his daily and nightly exercise, forgot to pray that his Majesty might be blessed with a long and a prosperous reign, and that his throne, and the throne of his posterity, might be established in righteousness. Oh, madam, if ever ye kend what it was to sorrow for and with a sinning and a suffering creature, whose mind is sae tossed that she can be neither ca'd [1] fit to live or die, have some compassion on our misery !—Save an honest house from dishonour, and an unhappy girl, not eighteen years of age, from an early and dreadful death ! Alas ! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves, that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your Leddyship—and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—Oh, my Leddy, then it isna what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly. And the thoughts that ye hae intervened to spare the puir thing's life will be sweeter in that hour, come when it may, than if a word of your mouth could hang the haill Porteous mob at the tail of ae tow." [2]

Tear followed tear down Jeanie's cheeks, as, her features glowing and quivering with emotion, she pleaded her sister's cause with a pathos which was at once simple and solemn.

" This is eloquence," said her Majesty to the Duke

[1] Called. [2] One rope.

of Argyle. "Young woman," she continued, addressing herself to Jeanie, "*I* cannot grant a pardon to your sister—but you shall not want my warm intercession with his Majesty. Take this housewife's case," she continued, putting a small embroidered needle-case into Jeanie's hands; "do not open it now, but at your leisure you will find something in it which will remind you that you have had an interview with Queen Caroline."

Not less admirable, in a different mood, is the setting out of Jeanie on her journey, when she receives the proposal of the Laird of Dumbiedikes.

Thus speaking to himself, he led her into an old-fashioned parlour, shut the door behind them, and fastened it with a bolt. While Jeanie, surprised at this manœuvre, remained as near the door as possible, the Laird quitted her hand, and pressed upon a spring lock fixed in an oak panel in the wainscot, which instantly slipped aside. An iron strong-box was discovered in a recess of the wall; he opened this also, and, pulling out two or three drawers, showed that they were filled with leathern bags, full of gold and silver coin.

"This is my bank, Jeanie lass," he said, looking first at her, and then at the treasure, with an air of great complacency,—"nane o' your goldsmith's bills for me,—they bring folk to ruin."

Then suddenly changing his tone, he resolutely said,—"Jeanie, I will make ye Leddy Dumbiedikes afore the sun sets, and ye may ride to Lunnon in your ain coach, if ye like."

"Na, Laird," said Jeanie, "that can never be—my father's grief—my sister's situation—the discredit to you——"

"That's *my* business," said Dumbiedikes; "ye wad

say naething about that if ye werena a fule [1]—and yet I like ye the better for't—ae wise body's eneugh in the married state. But if your heart's ower fu', take what siller will serve ye, and let it be when ye come back again—as gude syne as sune." [2]

"But, Laird," said Jeanie, who felt the necessity of being explicit with so extraordinary a lover, "I like another man better than you, and I canna marry ye."

"Another man better than me, Jeanie?" said Dumbiedikes—"how is that possible?—It's no possible, woman—ye hae kend me sae lang."

"Ay, but, Laird," said Jeanie, with persevering simplicity, "I hae kend him langer."

"Langer?—It's no possible!" exclaimed the poor Laird. "It canna be; ye were born on the land. O Jeanie, woman, ye haena lookit—ye haena seen the half o' the gear." He drew out another drawer—"A' gowd, Jeanie—clear three hunder sterling—deil a wadset,[3] heritable band, or burden—Ye haena lookit at them, woman—And then my mother's wardrobe, and my grandmother's forby—silk gowns wad stand on their ends, pearlin-lace as fine as spiders' webs, and rings and earrings to the boot of a' that—they are a' in the chamber of deas—Oh, Jeanie, gang up the stair and look at them!"

But Jeanie held fast her integrity, though beset with temptations, which perhaps the Laird of Dumbiedikes did not greatly err in supposing were those most affecting to her sex.

"It canna be, Laird—I have said it—and I canna break my word till him, if ye wad gie me the haill barony of Dalkeith and Lugton into the bargain."

"Your word to *him*," said the Laird, somewhat pettishly; "but wha is he, Jeanie?—wha is he?—I haena heard his name yet—Come now, Jeanie, ye are but queering us—I am no trowing that there

[1] Fool. [2] As well late as early. [3] Mortgage.

is sic a ane in the warld—ye are but making fashion—What is he ? wha is he ? "

" Just Reuben Butler, that's schulemaster at Libberton," said Jeanie.

" Reuben Butler ! Reuben Butler ! " echoed the Laird of Dumbiedikes, pacing the apartment in high disdain,—" Reuben Butler, the dominie at Libberton —and a dominie depute too !—Reuben, the son of my cottar ! Very weel, Jeanie lass, wilfu' woman will hae her way—Reuben Butler ! he hasna in his pouch the value o' the auld black coat he wears—but it disna signify." And, as he spoke, he shut successively, and with vehemence, the drawers of his treasury.

" A fair offer, Jeanie, is nae cause of feud—Ae man may bring a horse to the water, but twenty wunna gar him drink—And as for wasting my substance on other folk's joes[1]——"

There was something in the last hint that nettled Jeanie's honest pride. " I was begging nae frae your honour," she said ; " least of a' on sic a score as ye pit it on.—Gude morning to ye, sir ; ye hae been kind to my father, and it isna in my heart to think otherwise than kindly of you."

So saying, she left the room, without listening to a faint, " But, Jeanie—Jeanie—stay, woman ! " and traversing the courtyard with a quick step, she set out on her forward journey, her bosom glowing with that natural indignation and shame, which an honest mind feels at having subjected itself to ask a favour, which had been unexpectedly refused. When out of the Laird's ground, and once more upon the public road, her pace slackened, her anger cooled, and anxious anticipations of the consequence of this unexpected disappointment began to influence her with other feelings. Must she then actually beg her way to London ? for such seemed the alternative ; or

[1] Sweethearts.

must she turn back, and solicit her father for money; and by doing so lose time, which was precious, besides the risk of encountering his positive prohibition respecting her journey? Yet she saw no medium between these alternatives; and, while she walked slowly on, was still meditating whether it were not better to return.

While she was thus in an uncertainty, she heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and a well-known voice calling her name. She looked round, and saw advancing towards her on a pony, whose bare back and halter assorted ill with the nightgown, slippers, and laced cocked hat of the rider, a cavalier of no less importance than Dumbiedikes himself. In the energy of his pursuit he had overcome even the Highland obstinacy of Rory Bean, and compelled that self-willed palfrey to canter the way his rider chose; which Rory, however, performed with all the symptoms of reluctance, turning his head, and accompanying every bound he made in advance with a sidelong motion, which indicated his extreme wish to turn round—a manœuvre which nothing but the constant exercise of the Laird's heels and cudgel could possibly have counteracted.

When the Laird came up with Jeanie, the first words he uttered were,—"Jeanie, they say ane shouldna aye take a woman at her first word!"

"Ay, but ye maun take me at mine, Laird," said Jeanie, looking on the ground, and walking on without a pause. "I hae but ae word to bestow on onybody, and that's aye a true ane."

"Then," said Dumbiedikes, "at least ye suldna aye take a man at *his* first word. Ye maunna gang this wilfu' gate sillerless,[1] come o't what like."—He put a purse into her hand. "I wad gie ye Rory too, but he's as wilfu' as yoursell, and he's ower weel used

[1] Penniless.

to a gate[1] that maybe he and I hae gaen ower aften, and he'll gang nae road else."

"But, Laird," said Jeanie, "though I ken my father will satisfy every penny of this siller, whatever there's o't, yet I wadna like to borrow it frae ane that maybe thinks of something mair than the paying o't back again."

"There's just twenty-five guineas o't," said Dumbiedikes, with a gentle sigh, "and whether your father pays or disna pay, I make ye free till't without another word. Gang where ye like—do what ye like—and marry a' the Butlers in the country, gin ye like—And sae, gude morning to you, Jeanie."

"And God bless you, Laird, wi' mony a gude morning," said Jeanie, her heart more softened by the unwonted generosity of this uncouth character, than perhaps Butler might have approved, had he known her feelings at that moment; "and comfort, and the Lord's peace, and the peace of the world, be with you, if we suld never meet again!"

Dumbiedikes turned and waved his hand; and his pony, much more willing to return than he had been to set out, hurried him homewards so fast, that, wanting the aid of a regular bridle, as well as of saddle and stirrups, he was too much puzzled to keep his seat to permit of his looking behind, even to give the parting glance of a forlorn swain. I am ashamed to say, that the sight of a lover, run away with in nightgown and slippers and a laced hat, by a bare-backed Highland pony, had something in it of a sedative, even to a grateful and deserved burst of affectionate esteem. The figure of Dumbiedikes was too ludicrous not to confirm Jeanie in the original sentiments she entertained towards him.

"He's a gude creature," said she, "and a kind—it's a pity he has sae willyard[2] a powny." And she

[1] Road. [2] Wilful.

immediately turned her thoughts to the important journey which she had commenced, reflecting with pleasure, that, according to her habits of life and of undergoing fatigue, she was now amply or even superfluously provided with the means of encountering the expenses of the road, up and down from London, and all other expenses whatever.

At the end of 1818 Scott received a baronetcy, which pleased him, for he liked the revival of the famous Border name, Sir Walter Scott. "Remember," he wrote, "I anticipate the jest: 'I like not such grinning honours as Sir Walter hath.'[1] After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all stain but Border theft, and high treason, which, I hope, are gentlemanlike crimes; and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphry Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two."

All during the spring of 1819 his health was bad, and the colour of his hair changed from a brindled grey to snow white at the age of forty-seven. *The Bride of Lammermoor* and the *Legend of Montrose* appeared in this year. The latter scarcely does justice to the greatest and most romantic figure among Scottish men of action, but Scott excelled himself in the picture of the soldier of fortune, Dugald Dalgetty. The former is Scott's greatest experiment in pure tragedy, and in no other book has he so cunningly interwoven the supernatural. The end, when the

[1] Sir Walter Blunt—*1st King Henry IV.*, Act V. Scene 3.

Master of Ravenswood is lost in the quicksands, is as bare and moving a climax as any to be found in Greek tragedy :—

Seeing that his master would eat nothing, the old man affectionately entreated that he would permit him to light him to his chamber. It was not until the request was three or four times repeated, that Ravenswood made a mute sign of compliance. But when Balderstone conducted him to an apartment which had been comfortably fitted up, and which, since his return, he had usually occupied, Ravenswood stopped short on the threshold.

" Not here," said he sternly ; " show me the room in which my father died—the room in which SHE slept the night they were at the castle."

" Who, sir ? " said Caleb, too terrified to preserve his presence of mind.

" *She,* Lucy Ashton !—would you kill me, old man, by forcing me to repeat her name ? "

Caleb would have said something of the disrepair of the chamber, but was silenced by the irritable impatience which was expressed in his master's countenance. He lighted the way trembling and in silence, placed the lamp on the table of the deserted room, and was about to attempt some arrangement of the bed, when his master bid him begone in a tone that admitted of no delay. The old man retired, not to rest, but to prayer ; and from time to time crept to the door of the apartment, in order to find out whether Ravenswood had gone to repose. His measured heavy step upon the floor was only interrupted by deep groans ; and the repeated stamps of the heel of his heavy boot, intimated too clearly that the wretched inmate was abandoning himself at such moments to paroxysms of uncontrolled agony. The old man thought that the morning, for which he longed,

would never have dawned; but time, whose course rolls on with equal current, however it may seem more rapid or more slow to mortal apprehension, brought the dawn at last, and spread a ruddy light on the broad verge of the glistening ocean. It was early in November, and the weather was serene for the season of the year. But an easterly wind had prevailed during the night, and the advancing tide rolled nearer than usual to the foot of the crags on which the castle was founded.

With the first peep of light, Caleb Balderstone again resorted to the door of Ravenswood's sleeping apartment, through a chink of which he observed him engaged in measuring the length of two or three swords which lay in a closet adjoining to the apartment. He muttered to himself, as he selected one of these weapons, "It is shorter; let him have this advantage, as he has every other."

Caleb Balderstone knew too well, from what he witnessed, upon what enterprise his master was bound, and how vain all the interference on his part must necessarily prove. He had but time to retreat from the door, so nearly was he surprised by his master suddenly coming out, and descending to the stables. The faithful domestic followed; and, from the dishevelled appearance of his master's dress, and his ghastly looks, was confirmed in his conjecture that he had passed the night without sleep or repose. He found him busily engaged in saddling his horse, a service from which Caleb, though with faltering voice and trembling hands, offered to relieve him. Ravenswood rejected his assistance by a mute sign, and having led the animal into the court, was just about to mount him, when the old domestic's fear giving way to the strong attachment which was the principal passion of his mind, he flung himself suddenly at Ravenswood's feet, and clasped his knees, while he exclaimed, "Oh, sir! oh, master! kill me if you will,

but do not go out on this dreadful errand! Oh! my dear master, wait but this day—the Marquis of A—— comes to-morrow, and a' will be remedied."

"You have no longer a master, Caleb," said Ravenswood, endeavouring to extricate himself; "why, old man, would you cling to a falling tower?"

"But I *have* a master," cried Caleb, still holding him fast, "while the heir of Ravenswood breathes. I am but a servant; but I was born your father's—your grandfather's servant—I was born for the family—I have lived for them—I would die for them!—Stay but at home, and all will be well!"

"Well, fool? well?" said Ravenswood. "Vain old man, nothing hereafter in life will be well with me, and happiest is the hour that shall soonest close it!"

So saying, he extricated himself from the old man's hold, threw himself on his horse, and rode out at the gate; but instantly turning back, he threw towards Caleb, who hastened to meet him, a heavy purse of gold.

"Caleb!" he said, with a ghastly smile, "I make you my executor;" and again turning his bridle, he resumed his course down the hill.

The gold fell unheeded on the pavement, for the old man ran to observe the course which was taken by his master, who turned to the left down a small and broken path, which gained the seashore through a cleft in the rock, and led to a sort of cove, where, in former times, the boats of the castle were wont to be moored. Observing him take this course, Caleb hastened to the eastern battlement, which commanded the prospect of the whole sands, very near as far as the village of Wolf's-hope. He could easily see his master riding in that direction, as fast as the horse could carry him. The prophecy at once rushed on Balderstone's mind, that the Lord of Ravenswood should perish in the Kelpie's Flow, which lay half-way betwixt the tower and the links, or sand knolls, to the northward of

Wolf's-hope. He saw him accordingly reach the fatal spot, but he never saw him pass farther.

Colonel Ashton, frantic for revenge, was already in the field, pacing the turf with eagerness, and looking with impatience towards the tower for the arrival of his antagonist. The sun had now risen, and showed its broad disk above the eastern sea, so that he could easily discern the horseman who rode towards him with speed which argued impatience equal to his own. At once the figure became invisible, as if it had melted into the air. He rubbed his eyes, as if he had witnessed an apparition, and then hastened to the spot, near which he was met by Balderstone, who came from the opposite direction. No trace whatever of horse or rider could be discerned ; it only appeared that the late winds and high tides had greatly extended the usual bounds of the quicksand, and that the unfortunate horseman, as appeared from the hoof-tracks, in his precipitate haste, had not attended to keep on the firm sands on the foot of the rock, but had taken the shortest and most dangerous course. One only vestige of his fate appeared. A large sable feather had been detached from his hat, and the rippling waves of the rising tide wafted it to Caleb's feet. The old man took it up, dried it, and placed it in his bosom.

In the last month of that year *Ivanhoe* appeared, which, since it was free from Scots dialect, had a more clamorous welcome across the Borders than any other of the novels. Its publication marked the high-water point of Sir Walter's popularity. He had chosen a period of history always popular with his countrymen —the doings of Richard Cœur de Lion and of Robin Hood and his merry men in the greenwood. He takes violent liberties with facts, and it is easy to compile

a lengthy list of his blunders. But for the first time he had made the Middle Ages live in fiction, and he had invented a kind of language for the great figures of the past which was at once natural and dignified. Most of *Ivanhoe* is below the level of the great Scottish novels, but it has its unsurpassed moments, as when Locksley suddenly talks of the " North Country " and summons Old England to his aid. Before the story has all been excellent straightforward narrative—the strife of Saxon and Norman, the fooling of Wamba—but suddenly the bells of Elfland are set ringing :—

The diminished list of competitors for silvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

" Fellow," said Prince John, " I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry men as stand yonder."

" Under favour, sir," replied the yeoman, " I have another reason for refraining to shoot, besides the fearing discomfiture and disgrace."

" And what is thy other reason ? " said Prince John, who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

" Because," replied the woodsman, " I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks ; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might relish the winning of a third prize by

one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure."

Prince John coloured as he put the question, "What is thy name, yeoman?"

"Locksley," answered the yeoman.

"Then, Locksley," said Prince John, "thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou losest it, thou shalt be stripped of thy Lincoln green, and scourged out of the lists with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart."

"And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager?" said the yeoman.—"Your Grace's power, supported, as it is, by so many men-at-arms, may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to bend or to draw my bow."

"If thou refusest my fair proffer," said the Prince, "the provost of the lists shall cut thy bowstring, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven."

"This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince," said the yeoman, "to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure."

"Look to him close, men-at-arms," said Prince John, "his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial.—And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a buck and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder tent, when the prize is won."

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. The contending archers took their station in turn, at the bottom of the southern access, the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called

a shot at rovers. The archers, having previously determined by lot their order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank, termed the Provost of the Games ; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded, had they condescended to superintend the sports of the yeomanry.

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

" Now, Locksley," said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, " wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldric, and quiver to the provost of the sports ? "

" Sith it be no better," said Locksley, " I am content to try my fortune ; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose."

" That is but fair," answered Prince John, " and it shall not be refused thee.—If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee."

" A man can do but his best," answered Hubert ; " but my grandsire drew a good long-bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory."

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on

the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping-place was nigh level with his face, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

"You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert," said his antagonist, bending his bow, "or that had been a better shot."

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

"By the light of heaven!" said Prince John to Hubert, "an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!"

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. "An your highness were to hang me," he said, "a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow——"

"The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!" interrupted John; "shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worse for thee!"

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

"A Hubert! a Hubert!" shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. "In the clout!—in the clout! a Hubert for ever!"

"Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley," said the Prince with an insulting smile.

" I will notch his shaft for him, however," replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. " This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood," whispered the yeomen to each other ; " such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

" And now," said Locksley, " I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country ; and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best."

He then turned to leave the lists. " Let your guards attend me," he said, " if you please ; I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape ; but the cry of " Shame ! shame ! " which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. " For his own part," he said, " and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old," he said, " might hit yonder target with a headless shaft ; but," added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, " he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both

bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself."

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life, and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers—or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson's whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see."

"Cowardly dog!" said Prince John.—"Sirrah, Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe'er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill."

"I will do my best, as Hubert says," answered Locksley; "no man can do more."

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill—his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. "These twenty nobles," he said, "which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our bodyguard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft."

"Pardon me, noble Prince," said Locksley; "but I have vowed, that if ever I take service, it should

be with your royal brother King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

## CHAPTER V

### THE SUNSHINE OF SUCCESS

After 1819 Scott's health had a period of recovery. His portrait was painted by Lawrence, who said that in his opinion the two greatest men he had ever painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter. He visited London frequently, and at Abbotsford still worked faithfully all the early hours of the morning, while he passed the rest of the day in the easy routine of a country gentleman. Here is Lockhart's picture of the Abbotsford household:—

> He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament House—there was found generally some hearty home-spun laird, with his dame, and the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso racecourse and the Jedburgh ball were Life and the World. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connections, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost

sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely if ever found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as society. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in an obscure circle, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a page by the use of his pen.

And here is a sketch of the doings of an autumn day:—

It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was that staunchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he, too, was there on his shelty, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sybil, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and, among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable until we should reach the ground of our battue. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept Hoddin Grey, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the

most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sybil Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when the Lady Anne broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed—"Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet."—Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round his neck, and was dragged into the background:—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

" What will I do gin my hoggie die ?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie !
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And wow ! but I was vogie ! " [1]

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

Scott had the feudal love of bringing the whole countryside into his pleasures, and a characteristic institution of his was the Abbotsford Hunt :—

This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr. John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield ; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauldshields Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended with soup for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair ; Adam Fergusson croupier, and Dominie Thompson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport ; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase " as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, " Well done, Mr. George ! I think we've had everything but the view holla ! " The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded

[1] Sad.

forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup and hotch-potch extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, a sucking-pig, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, black puddings, white puddings, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding; the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Fergusson and humbler heroes fought their Peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland tryste; and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful, hearty, little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh)—gave us "Dick o' the Cow, or Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid"; his son Thomas (Sir Walter's assiduous disciple and assistant in Border Heraldry and Genealogy) shone without a rival in "The Douglas Tragedy" and "The Twa Corbies"; a weather-beaten, stiff-bearded veteran, Captain Ormistoun, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognized at the Horse-Guards), had the primitive pastoral of "Cowdenknowes" in sweet perfection; Hogg produced "The Women Folk, or The Kye comes Hame"; and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad; the Melrose doctor sang in

spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces ; a couple of retired sailors joined in "Bould Admiral Duncan upon the High Sea";—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with "Ale, good ale, thou art my Darling!" Imagine some smart Parisian savant—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young Lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of *Marmion* and *Ivanhoe*, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable Dandie himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for doch and dorrach—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated mountain dew. How they all contrived to get home in safety, Heaven only knows —but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experience of "o'ervaulting ambition." One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh lass (he gallantly added), I wish I could sleep for a towmont,[1] for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!"

Meantime novels flowed steadily from the Abbotsford study. *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Kenilworth* appeared in 1820—the last a brilliant incursion into the Elizabethan age, with at least one great scene:

[1] Twelvemonth.

the meeting of Elizabeth, Amy Robsart, and Leicester in the garden at Kenilworth, when for a moment the truth trembled on the brink of revelation :—

It chanced, upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train, who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase, was the Princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance, and the gardens which it connected with the Castle yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the Earl's arm affording his Sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the Queen and the Earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's silvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *aiguillettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons, and was therefore well suited at once to her height and to the dignity

of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting suit of Lincoln green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favourite Earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp) were of opinion that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage ; her looks seemed bent on the ground ; and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Duchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye and a blush on her cheek ; and still further, " She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine," said the Duchess, " she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion." To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident ; nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of a private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very different perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles,

as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended ; and Queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court ; hounds yelled in their couples ; and yeomen, rangers, and prickers lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view—or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The Queen, an accomplished and handsome woman, the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; and the Earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

" No, Dudley," said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—" no, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her Sovereign. No, Leicester, urge it no more. Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness, then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be. Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord."

" How ! leave you, madam ? " said Leicester,—" has my madness offended you ? "

" No, Leicester, not so ! " answered the Queen hastily ; " but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence ; and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy."

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen

stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself, "Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but no—no; Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone."

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless, and yet but too successful, rival lay concealed.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient Druidical monuments called Rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion; but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look, and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the Naiad whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue, or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady who entered the grotto

alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the Queen's knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian Nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many maskers and revellers were assembled ; so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned that by the doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness that the astonishment which had kept Amy immovable gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes, and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the Sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage ; and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give

her some encouragement ; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness, " How now, fair Nymph of this lovely grotto, art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the charms of the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear ? We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee."

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate Countess dropped on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

" What may this mean ? " she said ; " this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel—what wouldst thou have with us ? "

" Your protection, madam," faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

" Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it," replied the Queen ; " but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection ? "

Amy hastily endeavoured to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband ; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, " Alas ! I know not."

" This is folly, maiden," said Elizabeth impatiently ; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. " The sick man must tell his malady to the physician ; nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft without receiving an answer."

" I request—I implore," stammered forth the unfortunate Countess—" I beseech your gracious protec-

tion—against—against one Varney." She choked well-nigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

"What, Varney—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester! What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?"

"I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to——"

"To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless," said Elizabeth. "Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost.—Thou art," she said, bending on the Countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul—"thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

"Forgive me—forgive me, most gracious Princess!" said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches. Thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it—cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it—and married this same Varney."

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly with, "No, madam, no! as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy, woman! I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined

jealousy that some deception had been practised on her—" tell me, woman—for, by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou? Speak out, and be speedy. Thou hadst better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth."

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice which she saw, but could not avoid—permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, " The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

" The Earl of Leicester! " said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment. " The Earl of Leicester! " she repeated with kindling anger. " Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly! "

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified Countess, whom she still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

Leicester was at this moment the centre of a splendid group of lords and ladies, assembled together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place, to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting-party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance towards them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly

that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, attenuated, half-dead, yet still lovely female, whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who pressed towards her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill. "Where is my Lord of Leicester?" she said, in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around. "Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveller, he could not gaze upon the smouldering chasm, which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half-uttered, half-intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favour of the Queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning, from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of

the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ears of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, " Knowest thou this woman ? "

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride to burst its strong conjunction, and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast ; and it was the proud master himself who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flag-stones on which she stood.

" Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, " could I think thou hast practised on me—on me thy Sovereign—on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's ! "

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swoln with contending emotions, and only replied, " My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers. To them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service."

" What ! my lords," said Elizabeth, looking around, " we are defied, I think—defied in the Castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man !—My Lord Shrewsbury, you are Marshal of England, attach him of high treason."

" Whom does your Grace mean ? " said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

" Whom should I mean, but that traitor Dudley,

Earl of Leicester!—Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody. I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, "And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient."

"Patient—God's life!" exclaimed the Queen—"name not the word to me; thou knowest not of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended Sovereign, instantly (and alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs and her own danger in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless; no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester!"

"Why, minion," answered the Queen, "didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest. "Oh, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman!" said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this; or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace!"

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him for ever if he stooped to take shelter

under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head with the dignity of a man of honour to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his Countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man altogether overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my Liege, pardon!—or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the Castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"but spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and hearing what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!"

"And why, sweetheart?" said the Queen, moved by a new impulse; "what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?"

"Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him!"

"Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught already," answered the Queen.—"My Lord Hunsdon,

look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed, and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming."

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their services to look after her; but the Queen briefly answered, "Ladies, under favour, no. You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues; our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest.—Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her."

"By Our Lady," said Hunsdon, taking in his strong, sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, "she is a lovely child! and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own ladybirds of daughters."

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously, his war-worn locks and long, grey beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong, square shoulder. The Queen followed him with her eye. She had already, with that self-command which forms so necessary a part of a Sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of Hunsdon says well," she observed, "he is indeed but a rough nurse for so tender a babe."

"My Lord of Hunsdon," said the Dean of St. Asaph —"I speak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities—hath a broad license in speech, and garnishes his discourse somewhat too freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths which savour both of profaneness and of old Papistrie."

"It is the fault of his blood, Mr. Dean," said the Queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend

dignitary as she spoke ; " and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to choose their expressions. And by my word—I hope there is no sin in that affirmation—I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor."

In 1821 Scott went to London for the coronation of George IV., where he received, perhaps, the most remarkable tribute ever paid to a man of letters :—

> Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two or three o'clock in the morning ;—when he and a young gentleman, his companion, found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a sergeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly, that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavouring to persuade the sergeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, " Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care ! " The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, " What ! Sir Walter Scott ? He shall get through anyhow ! " He then addressed the soldiers near him—" Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman ! " The men answered, " Sir Walter Scott ! — God bless him ! "—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

*The Lives of the Novelists* appeared in that year, hack-work done for the Ballantyne firm, which was

beginning to weigh ever more heavily on his neck, and in December was published *The Pirate*. The following year brought *The Fortunes of Nigel*, which contains marvellous pictures of the court of James I. and the London of his day. Here is the interview between George Heriot, the Edinburgh goldsmith, and his king :—

No word was spoken on either side, but one of the ushers looked first to Heriot, and then to a little door half-covered by the tapestry, which seemed to say, as plain as a look could, " Lies your business that way ? " The citizen nodded ; and the court attendant, moving on tiptoe, and with as much caution as if the floor had been paved with eggs, advanced to the door, opened it gently, and spoke a few words in a low tone. The broad Scottish accent of King James was heard in reply, " Admit him instanter, Maxwell. Have you hairboured sae lang at the Court, and not learned that gold and silver are ever welcome ? "

The usher signed to Heriot to advance, and the honest citizen was presently introduced into the cabinet of the Sovereign.

The scene of confusion amid which he found the King seated was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments ; but they were arranged in a slovenly manner, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table was loaded with huge folios, amongst which lay light books of jest and ribaldry ; and, amongst notes of unmercifully long orations and essays on king-craft were mingled miserable roundels and ballads by the Royal 'Prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe with a list of the

names of the King's hounds and remedies against canine madness.

The King's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof, which gave him the appearance of a clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned awry communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad-coloured nightgown, out of the pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned grey hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carcanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet nightcap, in the front of which was placed the plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favourite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the King wore this highly-honoured feather.

But such inconsistencies in dress and appointments were mere outward types of those which existed in the royal character—rendering it a subject of doubt amongst his contemporaries, and bequeathing it as a problem to future historians. He was deeply learned, without possessing useful knowledge; sagacious in many individual cases, without having real wisdom; fond of his power, and desirous to maintain and augment it, yet willing to resign the direction of that, and of himself, to the most unworthy favourites; a big and bold asserter of his rights in words, yet one who tamely saw them trampled on in deeds; a lover of negotiations, in which he was always outwitted; and one who feared war, where conquest might have been easy. He was fond of his dignity, while he was perpetually degrading it by undue familiarity; capable of much public labour, yet often neglecting it for the meanest amusement; a wit, though a pedant; and a scholar, though fond of the conversation of the ignorant and uneducated. Even his timidity of temper was not uniform, and there were moments of his life, and those critical, in which he showed the spirit of his

ancestors. He was laborious in trifles, and a trifler where serious labour was required ; devout in his sentiments, and yet too often profane in his language ; just and beneficent by nature, he yet gave way to the iniquities and oppression of others. He was penurious respecting money which he had to give from his own hand, yet inconsiderately and unboundedly profuse of that which he did not see. In a word, those good qualities which displayed themselves in particular cases and occasions, were not of a nature sufficiently firm and comprehensive to regulate his general conduct ; and, showing themselves as they occasionally did, only entitled James to the character bestowed on him by Sully—that he was the wisest fool in Christendom.

That the fortunes of this monarch might be as little of a piece as his character, he, certainly the least able of the Stewarts, succeeded peaceably to that kingdom, against the power of which his predecessors had, with so much difficulty, defended his native throne ; and, lastly, although his reign appeared calculated to ensure to Great Britain that lasting tranquillity and internal peace which so much suited the King's disposition, yet during that very reign were sown those seeds of dissension which, like the teeth of the fabulous dragon, had their harvest in a bloody and universal civil war.

Such was the monarch who, saluting Heriot by the name of Jingling Geordie (for it was his well-known custom to give nicknames to all those with whom he was on terms of familiarity), inquired what new clatter-traps he had brought with him, to cheat his lawful and native Prince out of his siller.

" God forbid, my liege," said the citizen, " that I should have any such disloyal purpose. I did but bring a piece of plate to show to your most gracious Majesty, which, both for the subject and for the workmanship, I were loath to put into the hands of any

subject until I knew your Majesty's pleasure anent it."

"Body o' me, man, let's see it, Heriot—though, by my saul, Steenie's service o' plate was sae dear a bargain, I had 'maist pawned my word as a Royal King to keep my ain gold and silver in future, and let you, Geordie, keep yours."

"Respecting the Duke of Buckingham's plate," said the goldsmith, "your Majesty was pleased to direct that no expense should be spared, and——"

"What signifies what I desired, man? when a wise man is with fules[1] and bairns, he maun e'en play at the chucks. But you should have had mair sense and consideration than to gie Babie Charles and Steenie their ain gate;[2] they wad hae floored the very rooms wi' silver, and I wonder they didna."

George Heriot bowed, and said no more. He knew his master too well to vindicate himself otherwise than by a distant allusion to his order; and James, with whom economy was only a transient and momentary twinge of conscience, became immediately afterwards desirous to see the piece of plate which the goldsmith proposed to exhibit, and dispatched Maxwell to bring it to his presence. In the meantime he demanded of the citizen whence he had procured it.

"From Italy, may it please your Majesty," replied Heriot.

"It has naething in it tending to Papistrie?" said the King, looking graver than his wont.

"Surely not, please your Majesty," said Heriot; "I were not wise to bring anything to your presence that had the mark of the beast."

"You would be the mair beast yourself to do so," said the King. "It is weel kend that I wrestled wi' Dagon in my youth, and smote him on the ground-sill of his own temple; a gude evidence that I should be

[1] Fools. [2] Way.

in time called, however unworthy, the Defender of the Faith. But here comes Maxwell, bending under his burden, like the Golden Ass of Apuleius."

Heriot hastened to relieve the usher, and to place the embossed salver, for such it was, and of extraordinary dimensions, in a light favourable for his Majesty's viewing the sculpture.

"Saul of my body, man," said the King, "it is a curious piece, and, as I think, fit for a King's chalmer;[1] and the subject, as you say, Master George, vera adequate and beseeming, being, as I see, the judgment of Solomon, a prince in whose paths it weel becomes a' leeving monarchs to walk with emulation."

"But whose footsteps," said Maxwell, "only one of them—if a subject may say so much—hath ever overtaken."

"Haud your tongue for a fause fleeching[2] loon!" said the King, but with a smile on his face that showed the flattery had done its part. "Look at the bonny piece of workmanship, and haud your clavering tongue.—And whase handiwork may it be, Geordie?"

"It was wrought, sir," replied the goldsmith, "by the famous Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, and designed for Francis the First of France; but I hope it will find a fitter master."

"Francis of France!" said the King; "send Solomon, King of the Jews, to Francis of France! Body of me, man, it would have kythed[3] Cellini mad, had he never done onything else out of the gate. Francis!—why, he was a fighting fule, man—a mere fighting fule,—got himsel' ta'en at Pavia, like our ain David at Durham lang syne. If they could hae sent him Solomon's wit, and love of peace, and godliness, they wad hae dune him a better turn. But Solomon should sit in other gate[4] company than Francis of France."

[1] Chamber.
[2] Flattering.
[3] Proved.
[4] Kind of.

" I trust that such will be his good fortune," said Heriot.

" It is a curious and vera artificial sculpture," said the King, in continuation ; " but yet, methinks, the carnifex, or executioner there, is brandishing his gulley ower near the King's face, seeing he is within reach of his weapon. I think less wisdom than Solomon's wad have taught him that there was danger in edge-tools, and that he wad have bidden the smaik either sheathe his shabble, or stand farther back."

George Heriot endeavoured to alleviate this objection by assuring the King that the vicinity betwixt Solomon and the executioner was nearer in appearance than in reality, and that the perspective should be allowed for.

" Gang to the deil wi' your prospective, man," said the King ; " there canna be a waur prospective for a lawfu' king, wha wishes to reign in luve, and die in peace and honour, than to have naked swords flashing in his een. I am accounted as brave as maist folks ; and yet I profess to ye I could never look on a bare blade without blinking and winking. But a'thegither it is a brave piece ; and what is the price of it, man ? "

The goldsmith replied by observing that it was not his own property, but that of a distressed countryman.

" Whilk you mean to mak your excuse for asking the double of its worth, I warrant ? " answered the King. " I ken the tricks of you burrows-town merchants, man."

" I have no hopes of baffling your Majesty's sagacity," said Heriot ; " the piece is really what I say, and the price a hundred and fifty pounds sterling, if it pleases your Majesty to make present payment."

" A hundred and fifty punds, man ! and as mony witches and warlocks to raise them ! " said the irritated Monarch. " My saul, Jingling Geordie, ye are minded that your purse shall jingle to a bonny tune ! How am I to tell you down a hundred and fifty punds

for what will not weigh as many merks ? and ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear ! "

The goldsmith stood his ground against all this objurgation, being what he was well accustomed to, and only answered that, if his Majesty liked the piece, and desired to possess it, the price could be easily settled. It was true that the party required the money ; but he, George Heriot, would advance it on his Majesty's account, if such were his pleasure, and wait his royal conveniency for payment, for that and other matters—the money, meanwhile, lying at the ordinary usage.

" By my honour," said James, " and that is speaking like an honest and reasonable tradesman. We maun get another subsidy frae the Commons, and that will make ae compting[1] of it. Awa wi' it, Maxwell—awa wi' it ; and let it be set where Steenie and Babie Charles shall see it as they return from Richmond.—And now that we are secret, my good auld friend Geordie, I do truly opine, that speaking of Solomon and ourselves, the haill wisdom in the country left Scotland when we took our travels to the Southland here."

George Heriot was courtier enough to say that " the wise naturally follow the wisest, as stags follow their leader."

" Troth, I think there is something in what thou sayest," said James ; " for we ourselves, and those of our court and household, as thou thyself, for example, are allowed by the English, for as self-opinioned as they are, to pass for reasonable good wits ; but the brains of those we have left behind are all astir, and run clean hirdie-girdie,[2] like sae mony warlocks and witches on the devil's Sabbath-e'en."

" I am sorry to hear this, my liege," said Heriot.

[1] One account. [2] Upside-down.

" May it please your Grace to say what our countrymen have done to deserve such a character ? "

" They are become frantic, man—clean braincrazed," answered the King. " I cannot keep them out of the Court by all the proclamations that the heralds roar themselves hoarse with. Yesterday, nae further gane, just as we were mounted, and about to ride forth, in rushed a thorough Edinburgh gutterblood—a ragged rascal, every dud upon whose back was bidding good-day to the other, with a coat and hat that would have served a pease-bogle—and, without havings or reverence, thrust into our hands, like a sturdy beggar, some Supplication about debts owing by our gracious mother, and siclike trash ; whereat the horse spangs [1] on end, and, but for our admirable sitting, wherein we have been thought to excel maist sovereign princes, as well as subjects, in Europe, I promise you we would have been laid endlang on the causeway."

" Your Majesty," said Heriot, " is their common father, and therefore they are the bolder to press into your gracious presence."

" I ken I am *pater patriæ* well enough," said James ; " but one would think they had a mind to squeeze my puddings out, that they may divide the inheritance. Uds death, Geordie, there is not a loon among them can deliver a Supplication, as it suld be done in the face of Majesty."

" I would I knew the most fitting and beseeming mode to do so," said Heriot, " were it but to instruct our poor countrymen in better fashions."

" By my halidom," said the King, " ye are a ceevileezed fellow, Geordie, and I carena if I fling awa as much time as may teach ye. And, first, see you, sir, ye shall approach the presence of Majesty thus—shadowing your eyes with your hand, to testify that

[1] Leaps.

you are in the presence of the Vicegerent of Heaven.—Vera weel, George ; that is done in a comely manner.—Then, sir, ye sall kneel, and make as if ye would kiss the hem of our garment, the latch of our shoe, or such like.—Vera weel enacted ; whilk we, as being willing to be debonair and pleasing towards our lieges, prevent thus, and motion to you to rise ; whilk, having a boon to ask, as yet you obey not, but, gliding your hand into your pouch, bring forth your Supplication, and place it reverentially in our open palm." The goldsmith, who had complied with great accuracy with all the prescribed points of the ceremonial, here completed it, to James's no small astonishment, by placing in his hand the petition of the Lord of Glenvarloch. " What means this, ye fause loon ? " said he, reddening and sputtering ; " hae I been teaching you the manual exercise, that ye suld present your piece at our ain royal body ? Now, by this light, I had as lief that ye had bended a real pistolet against me ; and yet this hae ye done in my very cabinet, where nought suld enter but at my ain pleasure."

" I trust your Majesty," said Heriot, as he continued to kneel, " will forgive my exercising the lesson you condescended to give me in the behalf of a friend."

" Of a friend ! " said the King ; " so much the waur—so much the waur, I tell you. If it had been something to do *yoursel'* good, there would have been some sense in it, and some chance that you wad not have come back on me in a hurry ; but a man may have a hundred friends, and petitions for every ane of them, ilk ane after other."

" Your Majesty, I trust," said Heriot, " will judge me by former experience, and will not suspect me of such presumption."

" I kenna," said the placable monarch ; " the world goes daft, I think—*sed semel insanivimus omnes*. Thou art my old and faithful servant, that is the truth ; and, were't anything for thy own behoof, man,

thou shouldst not ask twice. But, troth, Steenie loves me so dearly that he cares not that any one should ask favours of me but himself.—Maxwell (for the usher had re-entered after having carried off the plate), get into the antechamber wi' your lang lugs.[1]—In conscience, Geordie, I think that as thou hast been mine ain auld fiduciary,[2] and wert my goldsmith when I might say with the Ethnic poet, *Non meâ renidet in domo lacunar*—for, faith, they had pillaged my mither's auld house sae, that beechen bickers,[3] and treen[4] trenchers, and latten platters were whiles the best at our board, and glad we were of something to put on them, without quarrelling with the metal of the dishes. D'ye mind, for thou wert in maist of our complots, how we were fain to send sax of the Blue-banders to harry the Lady of Loganhouse's dowcot and poultry-yard, and what an awfu' plaint the poor dame made against Jock of Milch, and the thieves of Annandale, wha were as sackless[5] of the deed as I am of the sin of murder?"

"It was the better for Jock," said Heriot; "for, if I remember weel, it saved him from a strapping up at Dumfries, which he had weel deserved for other misdeeds."

"Ay, man, mind ye that?" said the King; "but he had other virtues, for he was a tight huntsman, moreover, that Jock of Milch, and could hollow to a hound till all the woods rang again. But he came to an Annandale end at the last; for Lord Torthorwald run his lance out through him. Cocksnails, man, when I think of these wild passages, in my conscience I am not sure but we lived merrier in auld Holyrood in these shifting days, than now when we are dwelling at heck and manger.[6] *Cantabit vacuus*—we had but little to care for."

"And if your Majesty please to remember," said

[1] Ears. [2] Trustee. [3] Cups.
[4] Wooden. [5] Guiltless. [6] With every comfort.

the goldsmith, " the awful task we had to gather silver-vessail and gold-work enough to make some show before the Spanish ambassador."

" Vera true," said the King, now in a full tide of gossip ; " and I mind not the name of the right leal lord that helped us with every unce he had in his house, that his native Prince might have some credit in the eyes of them that had the Indies at their beck."

" I think, if your Majesty," said the citizen, " will cast your eye on the paper in your hand, you will recollect his name."

" Ay ! " said the King, " say ye sae, man ? Lord Glenvarloch, that was his name indeed—*justus et tenax propositi*—a just man, but as obstinate as a baited bull. He stood whiles against us, that Lord Randal Olifaunt of Glenvarloch ; but he was a loving and a leal[1] subject in the main. But this supplicator maun be his son—Randal has been long gone where king and lord must go, Geordie, as weel as the like of you ; and what does his son want with us ? "

" The settlement," answered the citizen, " of a large debt due by your Majesty's treasury, for money advanced to your Majesty in great state of emergency, about the time of the Raid of Ruthven."

" I mind the thing weel," said King James. " Ods death, man, I was just out of the clutches of the Master of Glamis and his complices, and there was never siller mair welcome to a born Prince—the mair the shame and pity that crowned King should need sic a petty sum. But what need he dun us for it, man, like a baxter[2] at the breaking ? We aught him the siller, and will pay him wi' our convenience, or make it otherwise up to him, whilk is enow between prince and subject. We are not *in meditatione fugæ*, man, to be arrested thus peremptorily."

" Alas ! an it please your Majesty," said the gold-

[1] True. [2] Baker.

smith, shaking his head, " it is the poor young nobleman's extreme necessity, and not his will, that makes him importunate ; for he must have money, and that briefly, to discharge a debt due to Peregrine Peterson, Conservator of the Privileges at Campvere, or his haill hereditary barony and estate of Glenvarloch will be evicted in virtue of an unredeemed wadset."

" How say ye, man—how say ye ? " exclaimed the King impatiently ; " the carle of a Conservator, the son of a Low-Dutch skipper, evict the auld estate and lordship of the house of Olifaunt ? God's bread, man, that maun not be ; we maun suspend the diligence [1] by writ of favour or otherwise."

" I doubt that may hardly be," answered the citizen, " if it please your Majesty ; your learned counsel in the law of Scotland advise that there is no remeid but in paying the money."

" Uds fish," said the King, " let him keep haud by the strong hand against the carle until we can take some order about his affairs."

" Alas ! " insisted the goldsmith, " if it like your Majesty, your own pacific government, and your doing of equal justice to all men, has made main force a kittle line to walk by, unless just within the bounds of the Highlands."

" Weel—weel—weel, man," said the perplexed monarch, whose ideas of justice, expedience, and convenience became on such occasions strangely embroiled ; " just it is we should pay our debts, that the young man may pay his. And he must be paid, and *in verbo regis* he shall be paid ; but how to come by the siller, man, is a difficult chapter. Ye maun try the city, Geordie."

" To say the truth," answered Heriot, " please your gracious Majesty, what betwixt loans, and benevolences, and subsidies, the city is at this present——"

[1] Process.

"Donna tell me of what the city is," said King James. "Our Exchequer is as dry as Dean Giles's discourses on the penitentiary psalms—*ex nihilo nihil fit*—it's ill taking the breeks aff a wild Highlandman. They that come to me for siller should tell me how to come by it. The city ye maun try, Heriot; and donna think to be called Jingling Geordie for nothing. And *in verbo regis* I will pay the lad if you get me the loan—I wonnot haggle on the terms; and, between you and me, Geordie, we will redeem the brave auld estate of Glenvarloch. But wherefore comes not the young lord to Court, Heriot? Is he comely—is he presentable in the presence?"

"No one can be more so," said George Heriot; "but——"

"Ay, I understand ye," said his Majesty—"I understand ye—*res angustæ domi*. Puir lad, puir lad! and his father a right true leal Scots heart, though stiff in some opinions. Hark ye, Heriot, let the lad have twa hundred pounds to fit him out. And, here—here" (taking the carcanet of rubies from his old hat)—"ye have had these in pledge before for a larger sum, ye auld Levite that ye are. Keep them in gage till I gie ye back the siller out of the next subsidy."

"If it please your Majesty to give me such directions in writing," said the cautious citizen.

"The deil is in your nicety, George," said the King; "ye are as preceese as a Puritan in form, and a mere Nullifidian in the marrow of the matter. May not a King's word serve ye for advancing your pitiful twa hundred pounds?"

"But not for detaining the crown jewels," said George Heriot.

And the King, who from long experience was inured to dealing with suspicious creditors, wrote an order upon George Heriot, his well-beloved goldsmith and jeweller, for the sum of two hundred pounds, to be paid presently to Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch,

to be imputed as so much debt due to him by the crown ; and authorizing the retention of a carcanet of balas rubies, with a great diamond, as described in a Catalogue of his Majesty's Jewels, to remain in possession of the said George Heriot, advancer of the said sum, and so forth, until he was lawfully contented and paid thereof. By another rescript, his Majesty gave the said George Heriot directions to deal with some of the moneyed men, upon equitable terms, for a sum of money for his Majesty's present use, not to be under 50,000 merks, but as much more as could conveniently be procured.

"And has he ony lair,[1] this Lord Nigel of ours?" said the King.

George Heriot could not exactly answer this question, but believed "the young lord had studied abroad."

"He shall have our own advice," said the King, "how to carry on his studies to maist advantage ; and it may be we will have him come to Court, and study with Steenie and Babie Charles. And, now we think on't, away—away, George ; for the bairns will be coming hame presently, and we would not as yet they kend of this matter we have been treating anent. *Propera pedem,* O Geordie. Clap your mule between your houghs, and god-den with you."

In the autumn came the visit of George IV. to Scotland, of which Scott was the main cause and the chief organizer. The next year saw the publication of *Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward,* and *St. Ronan's Well.* The first is, on the whole, a failure ; the second is a glittering romance of sword and cloak ; and the third is Scott's one attempt to write a novel of contemporary manners—an attempt which, but for

[1] Learning.

the prudery of his publisher in altering the plot, would have been a notable success. As it is, it contains in the landlady of the Cleikum Inn, Meg Dods, the greatest alewife in literature. She makes thus her entrance on the stage :—

The worthy couple (servants and favourites of the Mowbray family) who first kept the inn, had died reasonably wealthy, after long carrying on a flourishing trade, leaving behind them an only daughter. They had acquired by degrees not only the property of the inn itself, of which they were originally tenants, but of some remarkably good meadow-land by the side of the brook, which, when touched by a little pecuniary necessity, the Lairds of St. Ronan's had disposed of piecemeal, as the readiest way to portion off a daughter, procure a commission for the younger son, and the like emergencies. So that Meg Dods, when she succeeded to her parents, was a considerable heiress, and, as such, had the honour of refusing three topping farmers, two bonnet-lairds, and a horse-couper, who successively made proposals to her.

Many bets were laid on the horse-couper's success, but the knowing ones were taken in. Determined to ride the fore-horse herself, Meg would admit no helpmate who might soon assert the rights of a master ; and so, in single blessedness, and with the despotism of Queen Bess herself, she ruled all matters with a high hand, not only over her men-servants and maid-servants, but over the stranger within her gates, who, if he ventured to oppose Meg's sovereign will and pleasure, or desire to have either fare or accommodation different from that which she chose to provide for him, was instantly ejected with that answer which Erasmus tells us silences all complaints in the German inns of his time, *Quaere aliud hospitium ;* or as Meg expressed it, " Troop aff wi' ye to another public."

As this amounted to a banishment in extent equal to sixteen miles from Meg's residence, the unhappy party on whom it was passed, had no other refuge save by deprecating the wrath of his landlady, and resigning himself to her will. It is but justice to Meg Dods to state, that though hers was a severe and almost despotic government, it could not be termed a tyranny, since it was exercised upon the whole for the good of the subject.

The vaults of the old Laird's cellar had not, even in his own day, been replenished with more excellent wines; the only difficulty was to prevail on Meg to look for the precise liquor you chose;—to which it may be added, that she often became restive when she thought a company had had "as much as did them good," and refused to furnish any more supplies. Then her kitchen was her pride and glory; she looked to the dressing of every dish herself, and there were some with which she suffered no one to interfere. Such were the cock-a-leeky,[1] and the savoury minced collops, which rivalled in their way even the veal cutlets of our old friend Mrs. Hall, at Ferrybridge. Meg's table-linen, bed-linen, and so forth, were always home-made, of the best quality, and in the best order; and a weary day was that to the chambermaid in which her lynx eye discovered any neglect of the strict cleanliness which she constantly enforced. Indeed, considering Meg's country and calling, we were never able to account for her extreme and scrupulous nicety, unless by supposing that it afforded her the most apt and frequent pretext for scolding her maids; an exercise in which she displayed so much eloquence and energy, that we must needs believe it to have been a favourite one.

We have only further to commemorate the moderation of Meg's reckonings, which, when they closed the

[1] Chicken soup.

banquet, often relieved the apprehensions, instead of saddening the heart, of the rising guest. A shilling for breakfast, three shillings for dinner, including a pint of old port, eighteenpence for a snug supper—such were the charges of the inn of Saint Ronan's, under this landlady of the olden world, even after the nineteenth century had commenced; and they were ever tendered with the pious recollection, that her good father never charged half so much, but these weary times rendered it impossible for her to make the lawing less.

Notwithstanding all these excellent and rare properties, the inn at Saint Ronan's shared the decay of the village to which it belonged. This was owing to various circumstances. The high-road had been turned aside from the place, the steepness of the street being murder (so the postillions declared) to their post-horses. It was thought that Meg's stern refusal to treat them with liquor, or to connive at their exchanging for porter and whisky the corn which should feed their cattle, had no small influence on the opinion of those respectable gentlemen, and that a little cutting and levelling would have made the ascent easy enough; but let that pass. This alteration of the highway was an injury which Meg did not easily forgive to the country gentlemen, most of whom she had recollected when children. "Their fathers," she said, "wad not have done the like of it to a lone woman." Then the decay of the village itself, which had formerly contained a set of feuars and bonnet-lairds, who, under the name of the Chirupping Club, contrived to drink two-penny, qualified with brandy or whisky, at least twice or thrice a week, was some small loss.

The temper and manners of the landlady scared away all customers of that numerous class, who will not allow originality to be an excuse for the breach of decorum, and who, little accustomed perhaps to attendance at home, love to play the great man at an

inn, and to have a certain number of bows, deferential speeches, and apologies, in answer to the G— d—n ye's which they bestow on the house, attendance, and entertainment. Unto those who commenced this sort of barter in the Clachan of Saint Ronan's, well could Meg Dods pay it back, in their own coin; and glad they were to escape from the house with eyes not quite scratched out, and ears not more deafened than if they had been within hearing of a pitched battle.

Nature had formed honest Meg for such encounters; and as her noble soul delighted in them, so her outward properties were in what Tony Lumpkin calls a concatenation accordingly. She had hair of a brindled colour, betwixt black and grey, which was apt to escape in elf-locks from under her mutch when she was thrown into violent agitation—long skinny hands, terminated by stout talons—grey eyes, thin lips, a robust person, a broad, though flat chest, capital wind, and a voice that could match a choir of fishwomen. She was accustomed to say of herself in her more gentle moods, that her bark was worse than her bite; but what teeth could have matched a tongue, which, when in full career, is vouched to have been heard from the Kirk to the Castle of Saint Ronan's?

These notable gifts, however, had no charms for the travellers of these light and giddy-paced times, and Meg's inn became less and less frequented. What carried the evil to the uttermost was, that a fanciful lady of rank in the neighbourhood chanced to recover of some imaginary complaint by the use of a mineral well about a mile and a half from the village; a fashionable doctor was found to write an analysis of the healing waters, with a list of sundry cures; a speculative builder took land in feu, and erected lodging-houses, shops, and even streets. At length a tontine subscription was obtained to erect an inn, which, for the more grace, was called a hotel; and so the desertion of Meg Dods became general.

She had still, however, her friends and well-wishers, many of whom thought, that as she was a lone woman, and known to be well to pass in the world, she would act wisely to retire from public life, and take down a sign which had no longer fascination for guests. But Meg's spirit scorned submission, direct or implied. "Her father's door," she said, "should be open to the road, till her father's bairn should be streekit[1] and carried out at it with her feet foremost. It was not for the profit—there was little profit at it;—profit? —there was a dead loss;—but she wad not be dung by any of them. They maun hae a hottle,[2] maun they?—and an honest public canna serve them! They may hottle that likes; but they shall see that Lucky Dods can hottle on as lang as the best of them —ay, though they had made a Tamteen[3] of it, and linkit aw their breaths of lives, whilk are in their nostrils, on end of ilk other like a string of wild-geese, and the langest liver bruick[4] a' (whilk was sinful presumption), she would match ilk ane of them as lang as her ain wind held out." Fortunate it was for Meg, since she had formed this doughty resolution, that although her inn had decayed in custom, her land had risen in value in a degree which more than compensated the balance on the wrong side of her books, and, joined to her usual providence and economy, enabled her to act up to her lofty purpose.

She prosecuted her trade too with every attention to its diminished income; shut up the windows of one half of her house, to baffle the tax-gatherer; retrenched her furniture; discharged her pair of post-horses, and pensioned off the old hump-backed postillion who drove them, retaining his services,

[1] Stretched.

[2] This Gallic word (hotel) was first introduced in Scotland during the author's childhood, and was so pronounced by the lower class. (*Author's note.*)

[3] Tontine.

[4] Gained.

however, as an assistant to a still more aged hostler. To console herself for restrictions by which her pride was secretly wounded, she agreed with the celebrated Dick Tinto to re-paint her father's sign, which had become rather undecipherable ; and Dick accordingly gilded the Bishop's crook, and augmented the horrors of the Devil's aspect, until it became a terror to all the younger fry of the school-house, and a sort of visible illustration of the terrors of the arch-enemy, with which the minister endeavoured to impress their infant minds.

Under this renewed symbol of her profession, Meg Dods, or Meg Dorts, as she was popularly termed, on account of her refractory humours, was still patronized by some steady customers. Such were the members of the Killnakelty Hunt, once famous on the turf and in the field, but now a set of venerable grey-headed sportsmen, who had sunk from fox-hounds to basket-beagles and coursing, and who made an easy canter on their quiet nags a gentle induction to a dinner at Meg's. "A set of honest decent men they were," Meg said; "had their sang and their joke—and what for no? Their bind was just a Scots pint over-head, and a tappit-hen [1] to the bill, and no man ever saw them the waur o't. It was thae cockle-brained callants of the present day that would be mair owerta'en with a puir quart than douce folks were with a magnum."

Then there was a set of ancient brethren of the angle from Edinburgh, who visited Saint Ronan's frequently in the spring and summer, a class of guests peculiarly acceptable to Meg, who permitted them more latitude in her premises than she was known to allow to any other body. "They were," she said, "pawky [2] auld carles, that kend whilk side their bread was buttered upon. Ye never kend of ony o' them ganging to the spring, as they behoved to ca' the

[1] A large measure of claret. [2] Wise.

stinking well yonder.—Na, na—they were up in the morning—had their parritch,[1] wi' maybe a thimblefull of brandy, and then awa up into the hills, eat their bit cauld meat on the heather, and came hame at e'en wi' the creel full of caller[2] trouts, and had them to their dinner, and their quiet cogue of ale, and their drap punch, and were set singing their catches and glees, as they ca'd them, till ten o'clock, and then to bed, wi' God bless ye—and what for no ? "

Thirdly, we may commemorate some ranting blades, who also came from the metropolis to visit Saint Ronan's, attracted by the humour of Meg, and still more by the excellence of her liquor, and the cheapness of her reckonings. These were members of the Helter Skelter Club, of the Wildfire Club, and other associations formed for the express purpose of getting rid of care and sobriety. Such dashers occasioned many a racket in Meg's house, and many a *bourasque* in Meg's temper. Various were the arts of flattery and violence by which they endeavoured to get supplies of liquor, when Meg's conscience told her they had had too much already. Sometimes they failed, as when the croupier of the Helter Skelter got himself scalded with the mulled wine, in an unsuccessful attempt to coax this formidable virago by a salute ; and the excellent president of the Wildfire received a broken head from the keys of the cellar, as he endeavoured to possess himself of these emblems of authority. But little did these dauntless officials care for the exuberant frolics of Meg's temper, which were to them only " pretty Fanny's way "—the *dulces Amaryllidis iræ*. And Meg, on her part, though she often called them " drunken ne'er-do-weels, and thoroughbred High Street blackguards," allowed no other person to speak ill of them in her hearing. " They were daft callants," she said, " and that was

[1] Porridge. [2] Fresh.

all—when the drink was in, the wit was out—ye could not put an auld head upon young shouthers—a young cowt [1] will canter, be it up-hill or down—and what for no ? " was her uniform conclusion.

Nor must we omit, among Meg's steady customers, " faithful amongst the unfaithful found," the copper-nosed sheriff-clerk of the county, who, when summoned by official duty to that district of the shire, warmed by recollections of her double-brewed ale, and her generous Antigua, always advertised that his " Prieves," or " Comptis," or whatever other business was in hand, were to proceed on such a day and hour, " within the house of Margaret Dods, vintner in Saint Ronan's."

We have only further to notice Meg's mode of conducting herself towards chance travellers, who, knowing nothing of nearer or more fashionable accommodations, or perhaps consulting rather the state of their purse than of their taste, stumbled upon her house of entertainment. Her reception of these was as precarious as the hospitality of a savage nation to sailors shipwrecked on their coast. If the guests seemed to have made her mansion their free choice—or if she liked their appearance (and her taste was very capricious)—above all, if they seemed pleased with what they got, and little disposed to criticize or give trouble, it was all very well. But if they had come to Saint Ronan's because the house at the Well was full, or if she disliked what the sailor calls the cut of their jib—or if, above all, they were critical about their accommodations, none so likely as Meg to give them what in her country is called a *sloan*. In fact, she reckoned such persons a part of that ungenerous and ungrateful public, for whose sake she was keeping her house open at a dead loss, and who had left her, as it were, a victim to her patriotic zeal.

[1] Colt.

Hence arose the different reports concerning the little inn of Saint Ronan's, which some favoured travellers praised as the neatest and most comfortable old-fashioned house in Scotland, where you had good attendance, and good cheer, at moderate rates ; while others, less fortunate, could only talk of the darkness of the rooms, the homeliness of the old furniture, and the detestable bad humour of Meg Dods, the landlady.

Reader, if you come from the more sunny side of the Tweed—or even if, being a Scot, you have had the advantage to be born within the last twenty-five years, you may be induced to think this portrait of Queen Elizabeth, in Dame Quickly's piqued hat and green apron, somewhat overcharged in the features. But I appeal to my own contemporaries, who have known wheel-road, bridle-way, and footpath for thirty years, whether they do not, every one of them, remember Meg Dods—or somebody very like her. Indeed, so much is this the case, that, about the period I mention, I should have been afraid to have rambled from the Scottish metropolis, in almost any direction, lest I had lighted upon some one of the sisterhood of Dame Quickly, who might suspect me of having showed her up to the public in the character of Meg Dods. At present, though it is possible that some one or two of this peculiar class of wild-cats may still exist, their talons must be much impaired by age ; and I think they can do little more than sit, like the Giant Pope, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, at the door of their unfrequented caverns, and grin at the pilgrims over whom they used formerly to execute their despotism.

There is a picture of Sir Walter Scott at this time, drawn by his friend, J. L. Adolphus, who was the best contemporary critic of the novels :—

The great charm of his "table-talk" was in the sweetness and abandon with which it flowed,—always, however, guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described: and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation. No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek, silvery locks above; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted that the iris contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting; and when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragi-comic, hare-brained expression, quite peculiar to himself; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-Lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full

tide of mirth he did indeed "laugh the heart's laugh," like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go on telling or descanting, while his lungs did "crow like chanticleer," his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

## CHAPTER VI

### "REDGAUNTLET"

SCOTT had reached the summit of his fame, and though his health was no longer perfect, he was still a hale man, capable of enjoying life. In 1824 Abbotsford was completed, and the last of the great novels, *Redgauntlet*, was published. In many ways this represents the height of Scott's genius; not in construction, indeed, for the narrative rambles, but in his portrayal of the tragedy of the Stuart cause and the shipwreck of arrogance and pride. He put much of his youth into it, and the humours of the Edinburgh Law Courts are done from his own recollection. The book contains in "Wandering Willie's Tale" one of the half-dozen greatest short stories in the world:—

#### WANDERING WILLIE'S TALE

Ye maun have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet of that Ilk, who lived in these parts before the dear years. The country will lang mind him, and that our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out wi' the Hielandmen in Montrose's time; and again he was in the hills wi'

Glencairn in the saxteen hundred and fifty-twa ; and sae when King Charles the Second came in, wha was in sic favour as the Laird of Redgauntlet ? He was knighted at Lonon court, wi' the King's ain sword ; and being a red-hot prelatist, he came down here, rampauging like a lion, with commissions of lieutenancy (and of lunacy, for what I ken), to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters in the country. Wild wark they made of it ; for the Whigs were as dour as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first tire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong hand, and his name is kend as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tam Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle,[1] nor mountain, nor cave could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And troth, when they fand them, they didna mak muckle mair ceremony than a Hielandman wi' a roebuck. It was just, " Will ye tak the test ? "—if not, " Make ready—present—fire ! "—and there lay the recusant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan ; that he was proof against steel, and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hailstanes from a hearth ; that he had a mear [2] that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifra Gawns ;[3] and muckle to the same purpose, of whilk mair anon. The best blessing they wared [4] on him was, " Deil scowp [5] wi' Redgauntlet ! " He wasna a bad master to his ain folk, though, and was weel aneugh liked by his tenants ; and as for the lackeys and troopers that raid out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs ca'd those killing times, they wad hae drunken themsel's blind to his health at one time.

[1] Dingle.
[2] Mare.
[3] A precipitous side of a mountain in Moffatdale.
[4] Used.
[5] Scoop.

Now you are to ken that my gudesire [1] lived on Redgauntlet's grund—they ca' the place Primrose Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding days and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callerer [2] and fresher there than onywhere else in the country. It's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-cheek three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in—but that's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson. A rambling, rattling chiel' he had been in his young days, and could play weel on the pipes; he was famous at "Hoopers and Girders"; a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin"; and he had the finest finger for the back-lilt between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort that they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca'd it, which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of needcessity, that he might belang to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and liked little to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hosting, watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, and kend a' the folks about the castle, and was often sent for to play the pipes when they were at their merriment. Auld Dougal MacCallum, the butler, that had followed Sir Robert through gude and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was specially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the Laird; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution, and it had like to have broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegether sae

[1] Grandfather. [2] Cooler.

great as they feared and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unca crawing [1] what they wad do with their auld enemies, and in special wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were ower mony great folks dipped in the same doings to mak a spick and span new warld. So Parliament passed it a' ower easy; and Sir Robert, bating [2] that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was. His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the nonconformists, that used to come to stock his larder and cellar; for it is certain he began to be keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behoved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the Laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body that naebody cared to anger him; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on, made men sometimes think him a devil incarnate.[3]

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager—no that he was a very great misguider, but he hadna the saving gift—and he got twa terms' rent in arrear. He got the first brash [4] at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair word and piping; but when Martinmas came, there was a summons from the grund-officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behoved to flit. Sair wark he had to get the siller; but he was weel-freended, and at last he got the haill scraped thegether—a thousand merks. The maist of it was from a neighbour they ca'd Laurie Lapraik—a sly

[1] Crowing. [2] Excepting.

[3] The caution and moderation of King William III., and his principles of unlimited toleration, deprived the Cameronians of the opportunity they ardently desired, to retaliate the injuries which they had received during the reign of Prelacy, and purify the land, as they called it, from the pollution of blood. They esteemed the Revolution, therefore, only a half measure, which neither comprehended the rebuilding the Kirk in its full splendour, nor the revenge of the death of the saints on their persecutors. (*Author's note.*)

[4] Crisis.

tod.[1] Laurie had walth o' gear—could hunt wi' the hound and rin wi' the hare, and be Whig or Tory, saunt or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor in this Revolution warld ; but he liked an orra sough[2] of this warld, and a tune on the pipes weel aneugh at a bytime ; and abune a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he lent my gudesire ower the stocking at Primrose Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the Laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he learned at the Castle was that Sir Robert had fretted himsel' into a fit of the gout, because he did not appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'thegether for sake of the money, Dougal thought, but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour, and there sat the Laird his leesome lane, excepting that he had beside him a great ill-favoured jackanape, that was a special favourite of his ; a cankered beast it was, and mony an ill-natured trick it played—ill to please it was, and easily angered—ran about the haill castle, chattering and yowling, and pinching and biting folk, specially before ill-weather or disturbances in the state. Sir Robert ca'd it Major Weir, after the warlock[3] that was burnt ; and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature—they thought there was something in it by ordinar[4]—and my gudesire was not just easy in mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himself in the room wi' naebody but the Laird, Dougal MacCallum, and the Major, a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay, in a great

[1] Fox. [2] Occasional breath.
[3] A celebrated wizard, executed at Edinburgh for sorcery and other crimes.
[4] Extraordinary.

armed chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradle ; for he had baith gout and gravel, and his face looked as gash and ghastly as Satan's. Major Weir sat opposite to him, in a red laced coat, and the Laird's wig on his head ; and aye as Sir Robert girned [1] wi' pain, the jackanape girned too, like a sheep's head between a pair of tangs—an ill-faur'd, fearsome couple they were. The Laird's buff-coat was hung on a pin behind him, and his broadsword and his pistols within reach ; for he keepit up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to loup [2] on horseback and away after ony of the hill-folk he could get speerings [3] of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance ; but I judge it was just his auld custom—he wasna gien to fear onything. The rental-book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him ; and a book of sculduddery [4] sangs was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the goodman of Primrose Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he would have withered his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows that men saw the visible mark of a horse-shoe in his forehead, deep-dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

"Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom [5] whistle?" said Sir Robert. "Zounds! if you are——"

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The Laird drew it to him hastily—"Is it all here, Steenie, man?"

[1] Grimaced. [2] Leap. [3] News.
[4] Ribald. [5] Empty.

"Your honour will find it right," said my gudesire.

"Here, Dougal," said the Laird, "gie Steenie a tass[1] of brandy downstairs, till I count the siller and write the receipt."

But they werena weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garred[2] the castle rock. Back ran Dougal—in flew the livery-men—yell on yell gied the Laird, ilk ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdy-girdy—naebody to say "come in" or "gae out." Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet and wine to cool his throat; and hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swollen feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folk said that it *did* bubble and sparkle like a seething cauldron. He flung the cup at Dougal's head, and said he had given him blood instead of burgundy; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clotted blood aff the carpet the neist[3] day. The jackanape they ca'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master. My gudesire's head was like to turn; he forgot baith siller and receipt, and downstairs he banged. But as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan; and word gaed through the castle that the Laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire, wi' his finger in his mouth, and his best hope was that Dougal had seen the money-bag, and heard the Laird speak of writing the receipt. The young Laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never gree'd[4] weel. Sir John had been bred an advocate, and afterwards sat in the last Scots

[1] Glass.
[2] Made.
[3] Next.
[4] Agreed.

Parliament and voted for the Union, having gotten, it was thought, a rug[1] of the compensations. If his father could have come out of his grave, he would have brained him for it on his awn hearthstane. Some thought it was easier counting with the auld rough Knight than the fair-spoken young ane—but mair of that anon.

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither grat nor graned,[2] but gaed about the house looking like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a' the order of the grand funeral. Now, Dougal looked aye waur[3] and waur when night was coming, and was aye the last to gang to his bed, whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of dais, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state, as they ca'd it, weel-a-day! The night before the funeral, Dougal could keep his awn counsel nae langer; he came doun with his proud spirit, and fairly asked auld Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took ae tass of brandy to himsel', and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that, for himsel', he wasna lang for this warld; for that, every night since Sir Robert's death, his silver call had sounded from the state chamber, just as it used to do at nights in his lifetime, to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said that, being alone with the dead on that floor of the tower (for naebody cared to wake Sir Robert Redgauntlet, like another corpse), he had never daured to answer the call, but that now his conscience checked him for neglecting his duty; for, "though death breaks service," said MacCallum, "it shall never break my service to Sir Robert; and I will answer his next whistle, so be you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

[1] Clutch. [2] Wept nor groaned. [3] Worse.

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he wad not fail him at this pinch. So down the carles sat over a stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible; but Dougal would hear naething but a blaud [1] of Davie Lindsay, whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure enough the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it, and up got the twa auld serving-men, and tottered into the room where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw aneugh [2] at the first glance; for there were torches in the room, which showed him the foul fiend, in his ain shape, sitting on the Laird's coffin! Ower he cowped [3] as if he had been dead. He could not tell how lang he lay in a trance at the door, but when he gathered himself, he cried on his neighbour, and getting nae answer, raised the house, when Dougal was found lying dead within twa steps of the bed where his master's coffin was placed. As for the whistle, it was gane anes and aye; but mony a time was it heard at the top of the house on the bartizan and amang the auld chimneys and turrets, where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without mair bogle [4]-work.

But when a' was ower, and the Laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudesire for the full sum that stood against him in the rental-book. Weel, away he trots to the Castle to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking rapier by his side, instead of the auld broadsword that had a hundredweight of steel about

[1] Snatch.
[2] Enough.
[3] Fell.
[4] Ghost.

it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communing so often tauld ower that I almost think I was there mysel', though I couldna be born at the time. (In fact, Alan, my companion mimicked, with a good deal of humour, the flattering, conciliating tone of the tenant's address, and the hypocritical melancholy of the Laird's reply. His grandfather, he said, had, while he spoke, his eye fixed on the rental-book, as if it were a mastiff-dog that he was afraid would spring up and bite him.)

"I wuss[1] ye joy, sir, of the head seat, and the white loaf, and the braid lairdship. Your father was a kind man to friends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon[2]—his boots, I suld say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were muils[3] when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the Laird, sighing deeply, and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country. No time to set his house in order—weel prepared Godward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter, but left us behind a tangled hesp[4] to wind, Steenie.—Hem! hem! We maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume. I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-ganging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

*Stephen.* "Please your honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father."

*Sir John.* "Ye took a receipt then, doubtless, Stephen, and can produce it?"

[1] Wish.
[2] Shoes.
[3] Slippers.
[4] Clew.

*Stephen.* "Indeed I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set doun the siller, and just as his honour Sir Robert that's gane drew it till him to count it, and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him."

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause. "But ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *talis qualis* evidence, Stephen. I would go ower strictly to work with no poor man."

*Stephen.* "Troth, Sir John, there was naebody in the room but Dougal MacCallum, the butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master."

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead; and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too; and the siller, which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

*Stephen.* "I dinna ken, your honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins—for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses—and I am sure that ilka man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money."

*Sir John.* "I have little doubt ye *borrowed* the money, Steenie. It is the *payment* to my father that I want to have some proof of."

*Stephen.* "The siller maun be about the house, Sir John. And since your honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have ta'en it wi' him, maybe some of the family may have seen it."

*Sir John.* "We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable."

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudesire described. What was waur,[1]

[1] Worse.

he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae quean[1] had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room, and then said to my gudesire, "Now, Steenie, ye see ye have fair play; and, as I have little doubt ye ken better where to find the siller than ony other body, I beg, in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie;[2] for, Stephen, ye maun pay or flit."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wit's end; "I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour; "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave amongst us, it must be he that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added, mair sternly, "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advantage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my character, by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding. Where do you suppose this money to be? I insist upon knowing."

My gudesire saw everything look so muckle against him that he grew nearly desperate. However, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, sirrah," said the Laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular ane, which he had when he was angry—it seemed as if the wrinkles of his frown made that self-same fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow. "Speak out, sir! I *will* know your thoughts. Do you suppose that I have this money?"

[1] One maid. [2] Trouble.

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen.

"Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith[1] to charge them that may be innocent," said my gudesire; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Somewhere the money must be, if there is a word of truth in your story," said Sir John. "I ask where you think it is, and demand a correct answer."

"In hell, if you *will* have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity—"in hell! with your father, his jackanape, and his silver whistle."

Down the stairs he ran (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word), and he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the bailie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor (him they ca'd Laurie Lapraik), to try if he could make onything out of him; but when he tauld his story, he got but the warst word in his wame[2]—thief, beggar, and dyvour[3] were the saftest terms; and to the boot of those hard terms Laurie brought up the auld story of his dipping his hand in the blood of God's saunts, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the Laird, and that a Laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My gudesire was by this time far beyond the bounds of patience, and, while he and Laurie were at deil speed the liars, he was wanchancy[4] aneugh to abuse Lapraik's doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that garr'd[5] folks' flesh grue[6] that heard them—he wasna just himsel', and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmurkie, that is a' fou

[1] Loath. [2] Stomach. [3] Debtor.
[4] Ill-advised. [5] Made. [6] Creep.

of black firs, as they say. I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell. At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common a little lonely change-house, that was keepit then by an ostler-wife, they suld hae ca'd her Tibbie Faw, and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the haill day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bit of meat, but he couldna think o't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholly at twa draughts, and named a toast at each. The first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant; and the second was, a health to Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock[1] of siller, or tell him what came o't, for he saw the haill world was like to regard him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.[2]

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain road through the wood; when, all of a sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before, the nag began to spring, and flee, and stend,[3] that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle. Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That's a mettle beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?" So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-ho of a stumbling trot. "But his spunk's[4] soon out of him, I think," continued the stranger; "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things till he come to the proof."

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude e'en to you, freend."

But it's like the stranger was ane that doesna lightly

[1] Bag. [2] Holding. [3] Rear. [4] Fire.

yield his point ; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the self-same pace. At last my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry, and, to say the truth, half feared.

" What is it that ye want with me, freend ? " he said. " If ye be a robber, I have nae money ; if ye be a leal [1] man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking ; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it mysel'."

" If you will tell me your grief," said the stranger, " I am one that, though I have been sair misca'd in the world, am the only hand for helping my freends."

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

" It's a hard pinch," said the stranger ; " but I think I can help you."

" If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth," said my gudesire.

" But there may be some under the earth," said the stranger. " Come, I'll be frank wi' you. I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now, I can tell you that your auld Laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses, and the wailing of your family, and if ye daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt."

My gudesire's hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humorsome chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld [2] wi' brandy and desperate wi' distress, and he said he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther, for that receipt. The stranger laughed.

Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the

[1] True. [2] Bold.

door of a great house, and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer courtyard, through the muckle faulding yetts,[1] and aneath the auld portcullis ; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray[2] within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning, when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

" God ! " said my gudesire, " if Sir Robert's death be but a dream ! "

He knocked at the ha' door just as he was wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum, just after his wont, too, came to open the door, and said, " Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad ? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream. He looked for the stranger, but he was gane for the time. At last he just tried to say, " Ha ! Dougal Driveower, are ye living ? I thought ye had been dead."

" Never fash[3] yoursel' wi' me," said Dougal, " but look to yoursel' ; and see ye tak naething frae onybody here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except just the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through halls and trances that were weel kend to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour ; and there was as much singing of profane sangs, and birling of red wine, and speaking blasphemy and sculduddery, as had ever been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blithest.

But, Lord take us in keeping ! what a set of ghastly revellers they were that sat round that table ! My gudesire kend mony that had long before gane to their

[1] Folding gates. [2] Merriment. [3] Trouble.

place, for often had he piped to the most part in the hall of Redgauntlet. There was the fierce Middleton, and the dissolute Rothes, and the crafty Lauderdale; and Dalyell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle; and Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr. Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung; and Dunbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor baith to country and king. There was the Bluidy Advocate MacKenyie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom, had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks streaming down over his laced buff-coat, and his left hand always on his right spule[1]-blade, to hide the wound that the silver bullet had made. He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance; while the rest hallooed, and sung, and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully contorted from time to time; and their laughter passed into such wild sounds as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his banes.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers that had done their work and cruel bidding on earth. There was the Lang Lad of the Nethertown, that helped to take Argyle; and the Bishop's summoner, that they called the Deil's Rattle-bag; and the wicked guardsmen, in their laced coats; and the savage Highland Amorites, that shed blood like water; and many a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickeder than they would be—grinding the poor to powder when the rich had broken them to fragments. And mony, mony mair were coming and ganging, a' as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

[1] Shoulder.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, wi' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper, to come to the board-head where he was sitting —his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, while the great broadsword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time upon earth. The very cushion for the jackanape was close to him, but the creature itsel' was not there—it wasna its hour, it's likely, for he heard them say as he came forward, " Is not the Major come yet ? " And another answered, " The jackanape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his ghaist, or the deevil in his likeness, said, " Weel, piper, hae ye settled wi' my son for the year's rent ? "

With much ado my father gat breath to say that Sir John would not settle without his honour's receipt.

" Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert. " Play us up ' Weel hoddled, Luckie.' "

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned frae a warlock,[1] that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings ; and my gudesire had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle, but never very willingly ; and now he grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes wi' him.

" MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub," said the fearfu' Sir Robert, " bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him ! "

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes that might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them ; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was

[1] Wizard.

of steel, and heated to a white heat, so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himself again, and said he was faint and frightened, and had not wind aneugh to fill the bag.

"Then ye maun eat and drink, Steenie," said the figure; "for we do little else here, and it's ill speaking between a fou[1] man and a fasting."

Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the king's messenger in hand, while he cut the head off MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle; and that put Steenie mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat, or drink, or make minstrelsy, but simply for his ain—to ken what was come o' the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it. And he was so stout-hearted by this time that he charged Sir Robert for conscience' sake (he had no power to say the holy Name), and as he hoped for peace and rest, to spread no snares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. "There is your receipt, ye pitiful cur; and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat's Cradle."

My gudesire uttered mony thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop, though, thou sack-doudling son of a whore! I am not done with thee. Here we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelvemonth, to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a suddenty, and he said aloud, "I refer mysel' to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was

[1] Full.

dark around him, and he sunk on the earth with such a sudden shock that he lost both breath and sense.

How lang Steenie lay there he could not tell, but when he came to himsel', he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parochine[1] just at the door of the family aisle, and the scutcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and gravestane around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's twa cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand, fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the Laird.

"Well, you dyvour bankrupt," was the first word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah? Sir Robert's receipt! You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last at the date, which my gudesire had not observed. "*From my appointed place,*" he read, "*this twenty-fifth of November.*" "What!—That is yesterday! Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father—whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will delate[2] you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your

[1] Parish. [2] Accuse.

master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a torch!"

"I intend to delate mysel' to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himsel', and desired to hear the full history; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you—word for word, neither more nor less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time, and at last he said, very composedly, "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine; and if it be a leasing-making,[1] to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a red-hot iron driven through your tongue, and that will be as bad as scauding[2] your fingers wi' a red-hot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie; and if the money cast up, I shall not know what to think of it. But where shall we find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of bed or cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire; "he kens a' the odd corners about as weel as—another serving-man that is now gane, and that I wad not like to name."

Aweel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them that a ruinous turret, lang disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for the opening was on the outside, and far above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John; and he took (with what purpose Heaven kens) one of his father's pistols from the hall-table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

[1] Lie. [2] Scalding.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was auld and frail, and wanted ane or twa rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered at the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flees at him wi' a vengeance, maist dang him back ower; bang gaed the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire that stood beside him, hears a loud skelloch.[1] A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jackanape down to them, and cries that the siller is fund, and that they should come up and help him. And there was the bag of siller sure aneugh, and mony orra[2] things besides, that had been missing for mony a day. And Sir John, when he had riped[3] the turret weel, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour, and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that he would hereafter be a good master to him to make amends.

"And now, Steenie," said Sir John, "although this vision of yours tends, on the whole, to my father's credit, as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it concerning his soul's health. So, I think, we had better lay the haill dirdum[4] on that ill-deedie[5] creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taken ower muckle brandy to be very certain about onything; and, Steenie, this receipt" (his hand shook while he held it out) "it's but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire."

"Od, but for as queer as it is, it's a' the voucher I have for my rent," said my gudesire, who was

[1] Yell. [2] Odd. [3] Searched.
[4] Blame. [5] Ill-doing.

afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert's discharge.

"I will bear the contents to your credit in the rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand," said Sir John, "and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this term downward, at an easier rent."

"Mony thanks to your honour," said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind was; "doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour's commands —only I would willingly speak wi' some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of soumons[1] of appointment whilk your honour's father——"

"Do not call the phantom my father!" said Sir John, interrupting him.

"Weel, then, the thing that was so like him," said my gudesire. "He spoke of my coming back to see him this time twelvemonth, and it's a weight on my conscience."

"Aweel, then," said Sir John, "if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish. He is a douce[2] man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me."

Wi' that, my father readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt, and the Laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lum,[3] wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib.

My gudesire gaed down to the Manse, and the minister, when he had heard the story, said it was his real opinion that, though my gudesire had gaen very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet, as

[1] Summons. [2] Decent. [3] Chimney.

he had refused the devil's arles[1] (for such was the offer of meat and drink), and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped that, if he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang forswore baith the pipes and the brandy—it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal day passed, that he would so much as take the fiddle, or drink usquebaugh or tippenny.[2]

Sir John made up his story about the jackanape as he liked himsel' ; and some believe till this day there was no more in the matter than the filching nature of the brute. Indeed, ye'll no hinder some to threap[3] that it was nane o' the Auld Enemy that Dougal and Hutcheon saw in the Laird's room, but only that wanchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin ; and that, as to the blawing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himsel', if no better. But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds.[4] And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory—at least nothing to speak of—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his freends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.

In the noble conclusion on the Solway beach Scott provides a " falling close " like the end of a great lyric. It is high tragedy when we see Redgauntlet watching the fall of the Cause which has been entwined with his decaying house ; but the drama does not end with that. It ends, as all great drama must

[1] Wages in advance.
[2] Ale.
[3] Maintain.
[4] Dust.

end, in peace : in an anti-climax which is more moving than any climax, when a stranger—a Hanoverian and a Campbell—speaks over the dead Jacobitism a noble and chivalrous farewell, the epitaph of common-sense :—

Amid this scene of confusion, a gentleman, plainly dressed in a riding-habit, with a black cockade in his hat, but without any arms except a *couteau-de-chasse*, walked into the apartment without ceremony. He was a tall, thin, gentlemanly man, with a look and bearing decidedly military. He had passed through their guards, if in the confusion they now maintained any, without stop or question, and now stood, almost unarmed, among armed men, who, nevertheless, gazed on him as on the angel of destruction.

" You look coldly on me, gentlemen," he said. " Sir Richard Glendale—my Lord ——, we were not always such strangers. Ha, Pate-in-Peril, how is it with you ? and you too, Ingoldsby—I must not call you by any other name—why do you receive an old friend so coldly ? But you guess my errand."

" And are prepared for it, General," said Redgauntlet ; " we are not men to be penned up like sheep for the slaughter."

" Pshaw ! you take it too seriously. Let me speak but one word with you."

" No words can shake our purpose," said Redgauntlet, " were your whole command, as I suppose is the case, drawn round the house."

" I am certainly not unsupported," said the General ; " but if you would hear me——"

" Hear *me*, sir," said the Wanderer, stepping forward ; " I suppose I am the mark you aim at. I surrender myself willingly, to save these gentlemen's danger. Let this at least avail in their favour."

An exclamation of " Never, never ! " broke from

the little body of partisans, who threw themselves round the unfortunate Prince, and would have seized or struck down Campbell, had it not been that he remained with his arms folded, and a look, rather indicating impatience because they would not hear him, than the least apprehension of violence at their hand.

At length he obtained a moment's silence. "I do not," he said, "know this gentleman" (making a profound bow to the unfortunate Prince)—"I do not wish to know him; it is a knowledge which would suit neither of us."

"Our ancestors, nevertheless, have been well acquainted," said Charles, unable to suppress, even in that hour of dread and danger, the painful recollections of fallen royalty.

"In one word, General Campbell," said Redgauntlet, "is it to be peace or war? You are a man of honour, and we can trust you."

"I thank you, sir," said the General; "and I reply that the answer to your question rests with yourself. Come, do not be fools, gentlemen. There was perhaps no great harm meant or intended by your gathering together in this obscure corner for a bear-bait or a cock-fight, or whatever other amusement you may have intended; but it was a little imprudent, considering how you stand with government, and it has occasioned some anxiety. Exaggerated accounts of your purpose have been laid before government by the information of a traitor in your own counsels; and I was sent down post to take the command of a sufficient number of troops, in case these calumnies should be found to have any real foundation. I have come here, of course, sufficiently supported both with cavalry and infantry to do whatever might be necessary; but my commands are—and I am sure they agree with my inclination—to make no arrests, nay, to make no further inquiries of any kind, if this good

assembly will consider their own interest so far as to give up their immediate purpose, and return quietly home to their own houses."

"What!—all?" exclaimed Sir Richard Glendale—"all, without exception?"

"ALL, without one single exception," said the General; "such are my orders. If you accept my terms, say so, and make haste; for things may happen to interfere with his Majesty's kind purposes towards you all."

"His Majesty's kind purposes!" said the Wanderer. "Do I hear you aright, sir?"

"I speak the King's very words, from his very lips," replied the General. "'I will,' said his Majesty, 'deserve the confidence of my subjects by reposing my security in the fidelity of the millions who acknowledge my title—in the good sense and prudence of the few who continue, from the errors of education, to disown it.' His Majesty will not even believe that the most zealous Jacobites who yet remain can nourish a thought of exciting a civil war, which must be fatal to their families and themselves, besides spreading bloodshed and ruin through a peaceful land. He cannot even believe of his kinsman, that he would engage brave and generous, though mistaken men, in an attempt which must ruin all who have escaped former calamities; and he is convinced that, did curiosity or any other motive lead that person to visit this country, he would soon see it was his wisest course to return to the Continent, and his Majesty compassionates his situation too much to offer any obstacle to his doing so."

"Is this real?" said Redgauntlet. "Can you mean this? Am I—are all—are any of these gentlemen at liberty, without interruption, to embark in yonder brig, which, I see, is now again approaching the shore?"

"You, sir—all—any of the gentlemen present,"

said the General—" all whom the vessel can contain, are at liberty to embark, uninterrupted by me ; but I advise none to go off who have not powerful reasons unconnected with the present meeting, for this will be remembered against no one."

" Then, gentlemen," said Redgauntlet, clasping his hands together as the words burst from him, " the cause is lost for ever ! "

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DARK DAYS

" SURELY if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so," wrote Basil Hall during the Christmas of 1824. In January 1825 there was a great ball at Abbotsford in honour of the wedding of Scott's eldest son, who had married a Fife heiress. That year was filled with industrious book-making. Scott embarked upon his huge life of Napoleon, and wrote *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*, romantic novels in the *Ivanhoe* vein. There were a few little clouds to foreshadow the coming tempest. His health was less good ; his son-in-law, Lockhart, was leaving Scotland for London, and the delicacy of Lockhart's son was a constant anxiety to his grandfather. But it was not till the close of that year that the first real mutterings of the storm were heard.

In November Scott had begun his famous *Journal*, in a little locked vellum-bound book which is now in Mr. Pierpont Morgan's collection in New York. In

it he wrote his inmost thoughts intended for no eye but his own. Almost his first entry is a note that things were very bad in financial circles in London, and that Constable might be affected. This was a grave matter for Sir Walter, for with Constable's affairs were entwined those of the Ballantynes, and he was a secret partner in the Ballantyne business. At first he scarcely realized the import of the news, and early in December his spirits seem to have been rising. He writes in the *Journal :* " A stormy and rainy day. Walked from the Court through the rain. I don't dislike this. Egad, I rather like it ; for no man that ever stepped on heather has less dread than I of catch-cold ; and I seem to regain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which, in younger days, I used to enjoy a Tam-o'-Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain—the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did."

But on December 18th the rumour of misfortune became more insistent, and Scott was compelled to face the worst. The *Journal* contains the bitter cry of his heart :—

> Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half

resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest ?—how live a poor indebted man where I was once the wealthy, the honoured ? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things ! I must get them kind masters ! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees—I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be.

An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch ?—or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, "Poor gentleman" —"a well-meaning man"—"nobody's enemy but his own"—"family poorly left"—"pity he took that foolish title." Who can answer this question ? Poor Will Laidlaw !—poor Tom Purdie !—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

My heart clings to the place I have created—there is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.—What a life mine has been !—half-educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself ; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time ; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer ; broken-hearted for two years ; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch

of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it ? God knows ; and so ends the catechism.

Presently came better news, and a visit from Constable, who believed that he would weather the storm. Scott hurried on with *Woodstock*, and wrote the song "Bonnie Dundee"—"I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over." But on January 16th, 1826, when he was in Edinburgh, the blow fell, and the Ballantyne firm suspended payment. Scott refused to be made bankrupt, and demanded that his affairs should be put under trustees acting for his creditors. He took upon himself the whole debt of some £118,000, and pledged himself to pay off every creditor in full.

It is needless here to enter into the details of the catastrophe. The Ballantynes had never balanced their books, and had speculated wildly in their publishing ventures. Scott was their partner, and it is clear, as he himself admitted, that he was morally bound to do what he never did, and supervise their transactions. He had lived so long on fairy gold that he had lost touch with reality. So long as he could draw large sums to spend on the purchase of land and on building he was content not to examine too closely the source from which they came. In this matter he was undoubtedly to blame, and he never attempted to shelve the responsibility. The wisest comment upon the tragedy is that of Lockhart :—

They who knew and loved him, must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been, of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours ; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently reopened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind—I mean, that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway—beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other artist's recorded character and history ; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training

to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory of this life-long abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

He made noble atonement. At the age of fifty-five, already a weary man in broken health, he saddled himself with an enormous burden of debt, and refused to seek the easy refuge of bankruptcy. For the rest of his days he toiled unceasingly at his task; he succeeded, but he died of it. It was a simple and faithful following out of his creed, not quixotic or fantastic, but plain fidelity to the highest standards of human honour. He could not see that rules of morality, which held in the case of the ordinary man, should be slackened for the artist. He had no sympathy, as he said, "with the virtues which escaped in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket-handkerchief."

There have been critics of his action. Thomas Carlyle wrote: "It was a hard trial. He met it proudly, bravely—like a brave, proud man of the world. Perhaps there had been a prouder way still: to have owned honestly that he *was* unsuccessful, and then, all bankrupt and broken in the world's goods and repute, to have turned elsewhere for some refuge. Refuge did lie elsewhere; but it was not Scott's course or fashion of mind to seek it there." No doubt such a renunciation and retirement would have been what is called in the jargon of to-day a striking "gesture," and we can imagine the eulogies which later sentimentalists would have expended on it. But it would have meant that his creditors would not have been paid, that innocent people would have suffered for the consequences of his own folly. Such a course would

have been picturesque from a literary standpoint, but it would have been a shirking of a plain duty, and repugnant to Sir Walter's manly good sense. He had made a blunder, and his business was to atone for it without asking any one's help. Had he robed himself in his literary mantle and retired to a shieling among the hills to meditate on the transience of human glory, there would have been no atonement.

Scott had still seven years to live—years of sickness, loneliness, and incessant work. But he achieved his aim and paid off his debt in full. These years were the greatest period of his life, not as a creative artist, but as a man, and Sir Walter would always rather have been regarded as a good man than a good writer. He gave up his house in Edinburgh, and during his periods of duty in that city lived in humble lodgings. Abbotsford was largely shut up, and the few old servants who remained had to turn their hands to every kind of odd job. His friends rallied around him, and he received infinite kindnesses, especially from humble folk.

The work of these years cannot be judged by the same standards as the earlier books. *Woodstock*, indeed, which was written at the worst period of his trial, has remarkable merits, and characters like Trusty Tompkins, Sir Roger Wildrake, and particularly Cromwell, are masterly historical portraits.

Take this speech of Cromwell's, which has more psychological truth than most portraits of the Lord Protector :—

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, " Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man who is called, like me, to work great things in Israel had need to be,

as the poets feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immovable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described—' an iron man, and made of iron mould.' Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound ; and canst thou think it a light thing to me that, the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son. They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Bloodthirsty Usurper, already, for shedding the blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoken unto me graciously since that high deed ? Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scapegoat of atonement ; those who looked on and helped not bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence ; and while I looked that they should shout applause on me because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor instrument, they look aside to say, ' Ha ! ha ! the King-killer, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate.' Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude ; but when one feeleth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence, in sooth it is still a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear—and God be my witness that, rather than do this new deed, I would shed my own best heart's blood in a pitched field twenty against one.

And these sentences from the last chapter of *Woodstock* hold the tragedy of the time during which the book was written :—

Years rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed ; and yet Time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

*The Chronicles of the Canongate*, too, especially in the character of Crystal Croftangry, contain some of his best writing, and include two great short stories, " The Two Drovers " and " The Highland Widow." In *Tales of a Grandfather*, the publication of which began in December 1827, he made Scots history a living interest for children, and his great life of Napoleon is a remarkable achievement according to his own theory of history.

> Superficial it must be, but I do not disown the charge. Better a superficial book, which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see further into a mill-stone at every moment than the nature of the mill-stone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a minute philosopher, a botanist, or pebble-gatherer, who is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural scenery to look at grasses and chucky-stones.

But it is in the *Journal* that the lovers of Sir Walter will find the most characteristic writing of these last years. In this book, written only for himself, the style often takes on a strange tenderness and wistful-

ness, as if something hidden in his soul had at last found expression. Here in the first month of the cataclysm is his manly philosophy :—

> I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad—now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted—sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them. My poor people whom I loved so well ! There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill-luck; *i.e.*, if I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then *Woodstock* and *Bony* may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like, methinks, to go abroad,
>
> " And lay my bones far from the Tweed."
>
> But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work doggedly, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man that I ever was, neither low-spirited nor *distrait*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer ; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

Here, too, is his account of his first return to his Edinburgh work :—

> I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly ; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the differ-

ence of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, "Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts." Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred—all I believe meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on. A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who, having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No,—if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me.

His courage, even his humour, never failed him during these years; as he wrote to Will Laidlaw, "For myself, I feel like the Eildon Hills—quite firm, though a little cloudy." When in 1827 General Gourgaud proposed to challenge him to a duel owing to certain passages in the *Life of Napoleon*, Scott was eager to accept. He chose his second, and saw that Napoleon's old pistols, which he possessed, were in order. The *Journal* is full of both wit and geniality. "Misanthropy," he said, "I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other." Again, "I have rarely if ever found any one

out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification." Cheerfulness, even in the darkest days, is always breaking in on him, as with Dr. Johnson's friend. "Nature," he writes, "has given me a kind of buoyancy, I know not what to call it, that mingles even with my deepest afflictions and most gloomy hours. I have a secret pride—I fancy it will be so most truly termed—which impels me to mix with my distresses strange snatches of mirth."

There is no more wholesome record in the history of man. With profound humility ("the blockheads talk of my being like Shakespeare—not fit to tie his brogues"), with complete sanity, and with unshakable courage, he set himself to live the span of years that remained to him. He was almost constantly tired, and I know few more pathetic pictures than that of the old grey head sometimes bowed on his desk in utter fatigue.

As is natural, there is a profound melancholy in the *Journal*. The shadow of mortality lies heavy on its pages. Wherever he goes—to Oxford, to Paris, to London—he remembers the bright years that can never return. In May 1826 his wife died, and Scott wrote in his *Journal*:—

> I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which return on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language, as well as the tones, broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how

I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the wave that breaks on it.

I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished and embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it,—can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of sickness and pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative health. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up, if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters. . . .

Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somehow;

*where* we cannot tell ; *how* we cannot tell ; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation,—that necessity which rendered it even a relief,—that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me—the choking sensation. I have been to her room : there was no voice in it—no stirring ; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere ; all was neat as she loved it, but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her ; she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after me, and said, with a sort of smile, "You all have such melancholy faces." They were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said. When I returned, immediately (before) departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

They are arranging the chamber of death; that which was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a foot-fall. Oh, my God !

We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest is one of the rules of ultra-civilization which, in so many instances, strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living, and mention how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling ; and, so far as it may be adopted without

affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

In that type of elevated and solemn writing which has been called the "prose of mortality," the *Journal* has been rarely equalled. As to Sir Walter Raleigh, so to Sir Walter Scott had come the realization of life as a small thing against the vast deserts of eternity. I take some entries at random :—

> I have seen in these rooms the Emperor Alexander, Platoff, Schwarzenberg, old Blücher, Fouché, and many a maréchal whose truncheon had guided armies—all now at peace, without subjects, without dominion, and where their past life, perhaps, seems but the recollection of a feverish dream. . . .
>
> O Lord, what are we—lords of nature ? Why, a tile drops from a housetop, which an elephant would not feel more than the fall of a sheet of pasteboard, and there lies his lordship. Or something of inconceivably minute origin, the pressure of a bone, or the inflammation of a particle of the brain takes place, and the emblem of the Deity destroys himself or some one else. We hold our health and our reason on terms slighter than one would desire were it in their choice to hold an Irish cabin. . . .
>
> Another bad night. I remember I used to think a slight illness was a luxurious thing. My pillow was then softened by the hand of affection, and all the little cares which were put in exercise to soothe the languor or pain were more flattering and pleasing than the consequences of the illness were disagreeable. It was a new sense to be watched and attended, and I used to think that the *malade imaginaire* gained something by his humour. It is different in the latter stages. The old post-chaise gets more shattered and out of order at every turn ; windows will not be pulled up ; doors refuse to open, or being open will not shut again—which last is rather my case. There is some new subject of complaint every moment ; your sicknesses come thicker and thicker ; your com-

forting or sympathizing friends fewer and fewer: for why should they sorrow for the course of nature? The recollection of youth, health, and uninterrupted powers of activity, neither improved nor enjoyed, is a poor strain of comfort. The best is, the long halt will arrive at last and cure all. . . .

It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy. We meet on such occasions like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded and weakened ourselves, and looking through the diminished ranks of those who remain, while we think of those who are no more. Or they are like the feasts of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living. Yet where shall we fly from vain repining? Or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other?

These reflections, however, were for the seclusion of his Diary. To the world he continued to present a robust and cheerful demeanour, thankful for the consolations yet left to him, and ready to help whoever appealed to him. On one occasion, having no money to give to a young aspirant to the ministry, he wrote for him two sermons, and the recipient sold the copyright for £250. As he saw the burden of debt slowly diminishing and the day of complete redemption drawing near, he began once again to build castles in the air, and dreamed, if life were given him, not only of rehabilitating Abbotsford, but of adding to its acres. His creditors restored to him his books and collections, and in July 1831 he resigned his Clerkship in the Court of Session and received a pension.

On February 15th, 1831, came the first shock of

paralysis. He recovered and went on with his work, but his doom was sealed. That year he began the last of his novels, *Castle Dangerous*, and for the purpose paid a visit to the tombs of the Douglases. Lockhart's description of that last visit is a tragic picture of failing powers :—

> It was again a darkish cloudy day, with some occasional mutterings of distant thunder, and perhaps the state of the atmosphere told upon Sir Walter's nerves ; but I had never before seen him so sensitive as he was all the morning after this inspection of Douglas. As we drove over the high tableland of Lesmahago, he repeated I know not how many verses from Winton, Barbour, and Blind Harry, with, I believe, almost every stanza of Dunbar's elegy on the deaths of the Makers (poets). It was now that I saw him, such as he paints himself in one or two passages of his Diary, but such as his companions in the meridian vigour of his life never saw him—"the rushing of a brook, or the sighing of the summer breeze, bringing the tears into his eyes not unpleasantly." Bodily weakness laid the delicacy of the organization bare, over which he had prided himself in wearing a sort of half-stoical mask. High and exalted feelings, indeed, he had never been able to keep concealed, but he had shrunk from exhibiting to human eye the softer and gentler emotions which now trembled to the surface. He strove against it even now, and presently came back from the Lament of the Makers to his Douglases, and chanted, rather than repeated, in a sort of deep and glowing, though not distinct recitative, his first favourite among all the ballads :—
>
> "It was about the Lammas tide,
> When husbandmen do win their day,
> That the Doughty Douglas bownde him to ride
> To England to drive a prey,"—

down to the closing stanzas, which again left him in tears,—

"My wound is deep—I fain would sleep—
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me beneath the bracken-bush,
That grows on yonder lily lee."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE END

THE early autumn of 1831 was the last which Sir Walter was to spend at Abbotsford. It was a time of peace, like the mellow light of sunset. He was now gravely ill, and it was decided that he should spend the winter abroad; but he had the consolation of knowing that his debts were on the way to being repaid, and he was gladdened by a visit from his son, Major Walter Scott, of whom he said that "a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." Wordsworth, himself in declining health, came for a farewell visit, and wrote his famous sonnet :—

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of power assembled there complain
For kindred power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred King or laurelled Conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of Ocean, and the Midland Sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope.

Scott left Abbotsford on the 23rd September, attended by Lockhart and his daughter Anne. The British Government put a ship of war at his service—a generous tribute from the Whigs to their great opponent. He sailed in the *Barham* at the end of October; he reached Italy, by way of Malta, in December, and spent there the winter months.

But he was neither well nor happy. His body was worn out, and though he wrote incessantly, he could not recover his old skill. He remembered, too, that both Fielding and Smollett had been driven abroad by ill-health and had never returned. At Naples he heard of Goethe's death. "At least he died at home," was his comment. "Let us to Abbotsford." His mind was all upon his native country.

> Thus (says Lockhart), amidst the chestnut forest near Pæstum, he was heard repeating *Jock of Hazeldean*—and again, in looking down on the Lucrine Lake, Baiæ, Misenum, and Averno, he suddenly pronounced, "in a grave tone and with great emphasis," some fragment of a Jacobite ditty—
>
> "'Tis up the rocky mountain and down the mossy glen,
> We darena gang a milking for Charlie and his men."
>
> At Pompeii alone did his thoughts seem to be wholly commanded by the realities before him. There he had himself carried from house and house, and examined everything leisurely, but said little, except ever and anon in an audible whisper, "The city of the dead—the city of the dead!"

At Rome he could get no inspiration from the relics of the classic ages, and his chief pilgrimage was to the tomb of the last of the Stuarts. In April he hastened back through Germany, writing on the way his last

letter to Schopenhauer, the philosopher, regretting that he was too unwell to receive a visit from him. On June 13th, 1832, he arrived in London, and on 7th July took ship for Leith. He was now clearly dying, and the whole nation watched with sympathy and regret the ebbing of his mortal powers. Allan Cunningham mentions that, walking home late one night, he found several working men standing together at the corner of Jermyn Street, and one of them asked him, as if there were but one deathbed in London, "Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?"

On July 11th began his journey from Edinburgh to Tweedside. At first he was scarcely conscious.

> But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognizing the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—'Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee.'' As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited; and, when turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood, we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge; and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr. Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge, the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor; but on gaining the bank immediately above it, his excitement became again ungovernable.

The end came about half-past one in the afternoon of the 21st September, when Sir Walter breathed his

last in the presence of all his children. "It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around his bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes." He was buried as he desired, in Dryburgh Abbey, where his son-in-law, Lockhart, now sleeps at his feet. He had filled his sixty-one years of life with more toil and accomplishment than falls to the lot of any but the greatest. The sword had been worn out by use and not by rust, and he had been faithful to his own creed—

> One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name.

Sir Walter Scott, in his day, was the foremost figure in British letters, and not even Byron influenced more deeply the movement of European literature. Since then his fame has had its ups and downs. Fashions change in literature as in other things, and among the minor deities of the Pantheon of letters there are many displacements. But for Sir Walter there is little need of the feverish revivals which befall lesser men. Others abide our question, but he is free. Receptive and balanced minds have adjudged him his place ever since Byron told him, in a famous letter, that there was no one among the living of whom he need be jealous, or, all things considered, among the dead. The world forgets him and returns to him ; that rich and spontaneous genius of his endures through all the vagaries of literary mode, because he possessed

what Emerson has called the " stellar and indiminishable something," which is greatness.

He is beyond doubt the greatest of Scotsmen. In the world's literature he is one of the main creative forces—perhaps the nearest approach to that particular genius which was Homer's, and with much of the inexhaustible and catholic richness which was Shakespeare's. In the novel, as he conceived it, he has probably no equal. He did not write with a purpose ; he belonged to no school ; he was both romantic and realist ; but no one has excelled him in taking a large tract of human life, with all its complexities, and shaping it to the purposes of art by eliciting its beauty and drama. He has not the faultlessness of the minor masters, but his careless greatness has that " God's plenty " which Dryden found in Chaucer.

As a man he is among the most heroic figures in the history of letters, and for all the tragedies of his life he was one of the most fortunate of those who have followed the Muse, for he carried the secret of joy in his own heart. He was a great gentleman, for he had the highest and strictest code of honour ; and he was a great democrat, for he took all men for his brothers, and spoke to everybody, " as if he was their blood relation." He had no vanity or peevishness, for he thought that most of his contemporaries wrote better than he did, and that the humblest soldier who carried a gun for his country was a sounder fellow than he was. He was infinitely kind and patient, and in his kindness there was no condescension, for he could not have patronized anybody if he had tried. No one ever lived in the glare of publicity a life in

which there was less to cavil at or to regret. He had his foibles, the chief of which was his desire to re-create for himself in material form the romance of the past, and he paid heavily for them, and shouldered their burden. Even if every line of his other works were lost, the world would still acknowledge him as a very great man, if the *Journal* remained, for that book reveals him as one of the rare possessors of that tenderness which keeps watch over man's mortality and neither quails nor complains, and speaks to the generations a language as universal as the Gospel of St. John. Few mortals have left behind them a nobler heritage of both warmth and light.

THE END

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